

***Beauty and Power: Identity,
Cultural Transformation and Transgendering
in the Southern Philippines.***

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Abstract

This thesis addresses general questions about the relationship between the making of gender, the politics of national and ethnic identities, local - global articulations and the process of cultural transformation amongst Muslim Tausug and Sama communities in Sulu, the Southern Philippines. Specifically, I am concerned with the meaning, and experience, of the *bantut*, transvestite / transgender, homosexual men in Sulu. There is a long tradition of transvestism and transgendering in island Southeast Asia, where transvestites were considered to be sacred personages, ritual healers and/or, as in Sulu, accomplished singers and dancers who performed at various celebrations and rites of passage: embodiments of, and mediatory figures for, ancestral unity and potency. More recently, however, transvestites have emerged as the creative producers of an image of beauty defined in terms of an imagined global American otherness. This thesis is an attempt to understand and explain this phenomenon. In particular, I explore the relation between the collective endowment of the *bantut* as the purveyors of beauty, and their symbolic valorisation as impotent men and unproductive/defiling women: those who are seen to have been *overexposed* to and transformed by a potent otherness. What is ultimately at stake, I argue, (and what is being asserted through the symbolic circumscription of the *bantut*) is local persons' autonomy over the process and consequences of cultural and political transformation in the face of the exclusionary violence of state enforced assimilation. However, the thesis is also concerned with the expressed transgenderal projects of the *bantut* themselves, a project which is variously about status and gender transformation, the elation and pleasure they experience in the production and performance of beauty, and the attempt to overcome the prejudice of the local populace, whilst establishing relationships that are based on mutuality and shared respect. What this thesis demonstrates is that there is nothing ambiguous about ambiguity, sexual or otherwise. Rather, it is the specific product or effect of different historical relations of power and resistance through which various cultural subjects are created and re-create themselves.

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Although a Ph.D. is a very personal sojourn, it incorporates the investment (emotional, material and intellectual) of numerous persons; *remembrances* and debts of gratitude which I wish to acknowledge here.

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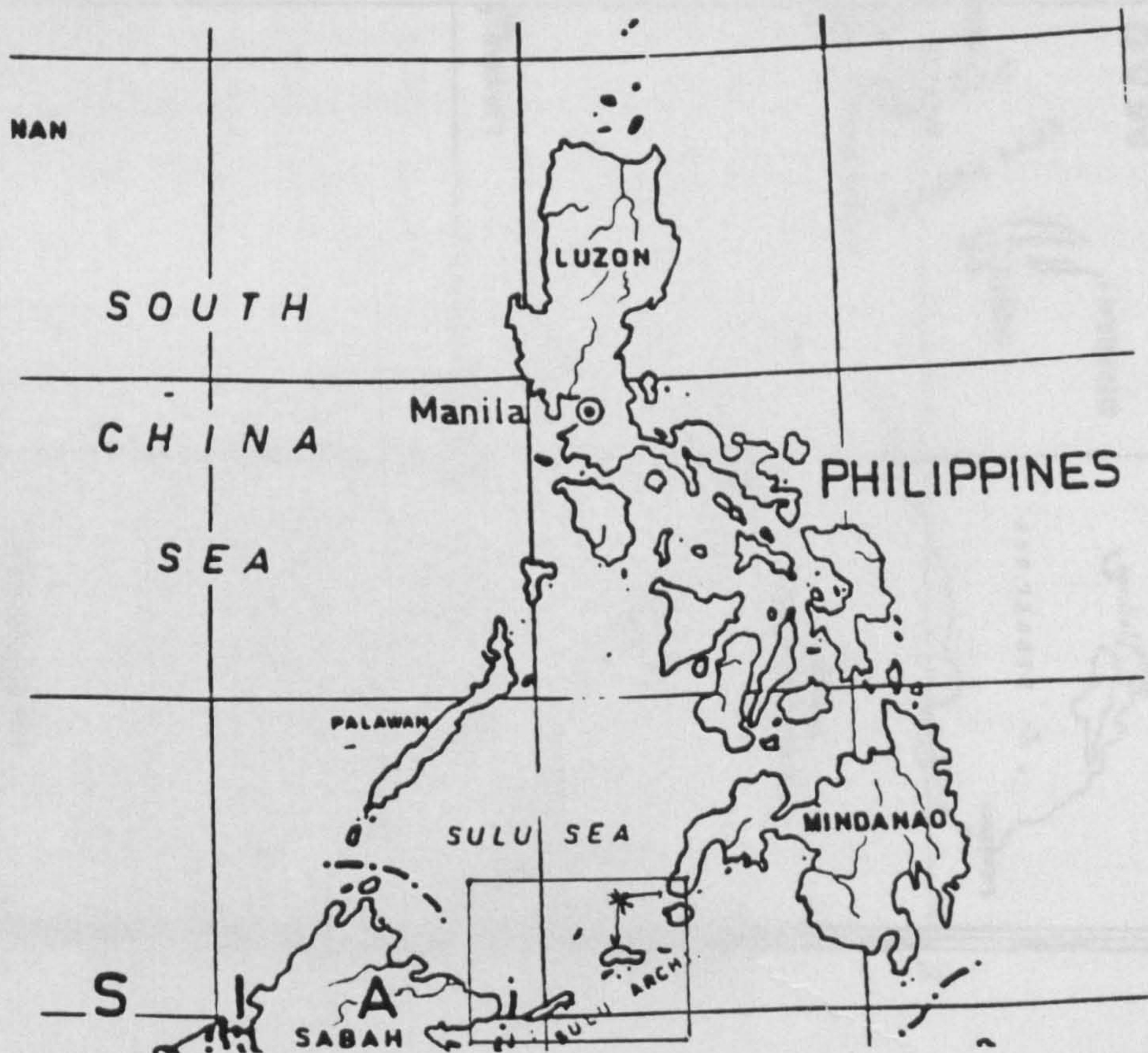
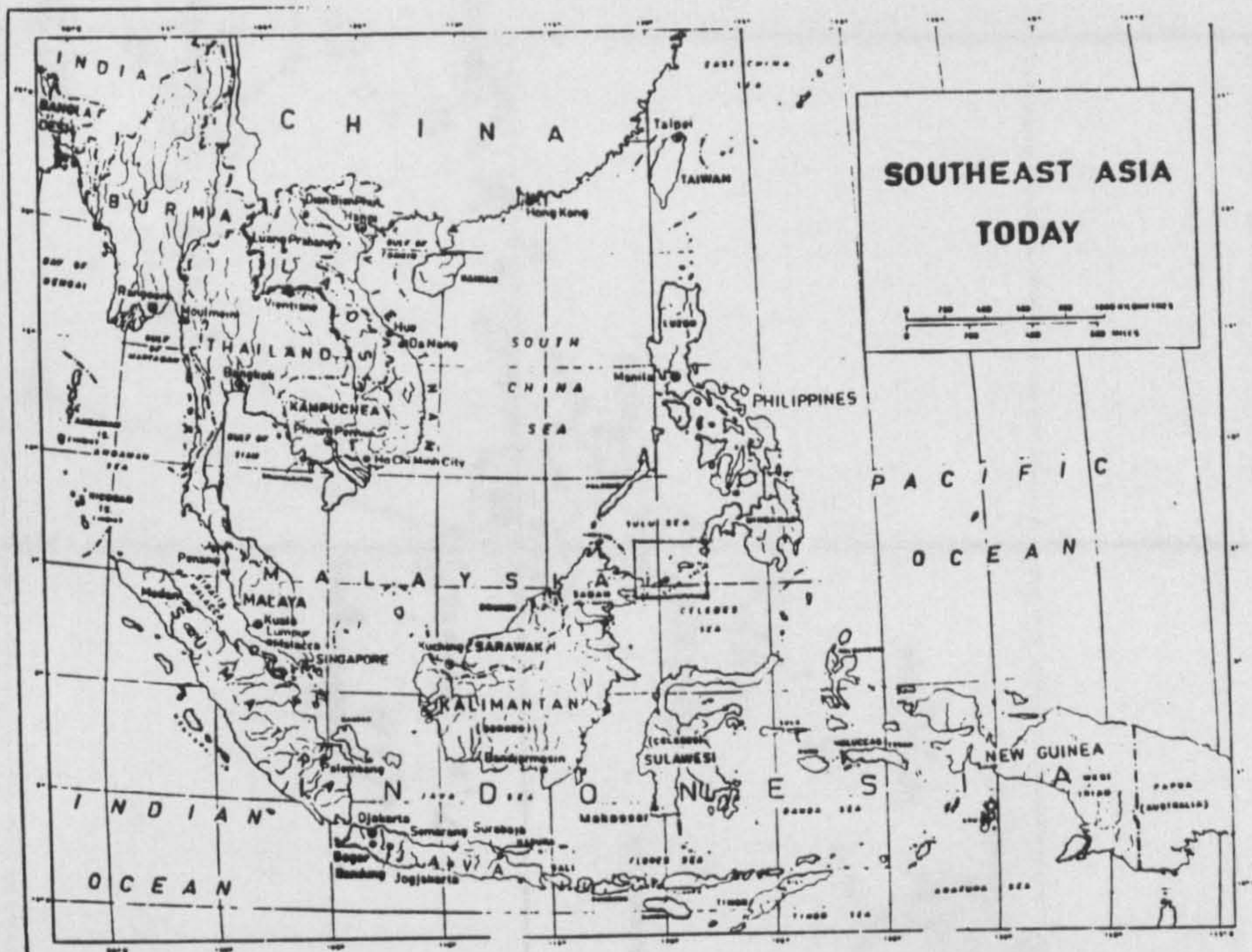
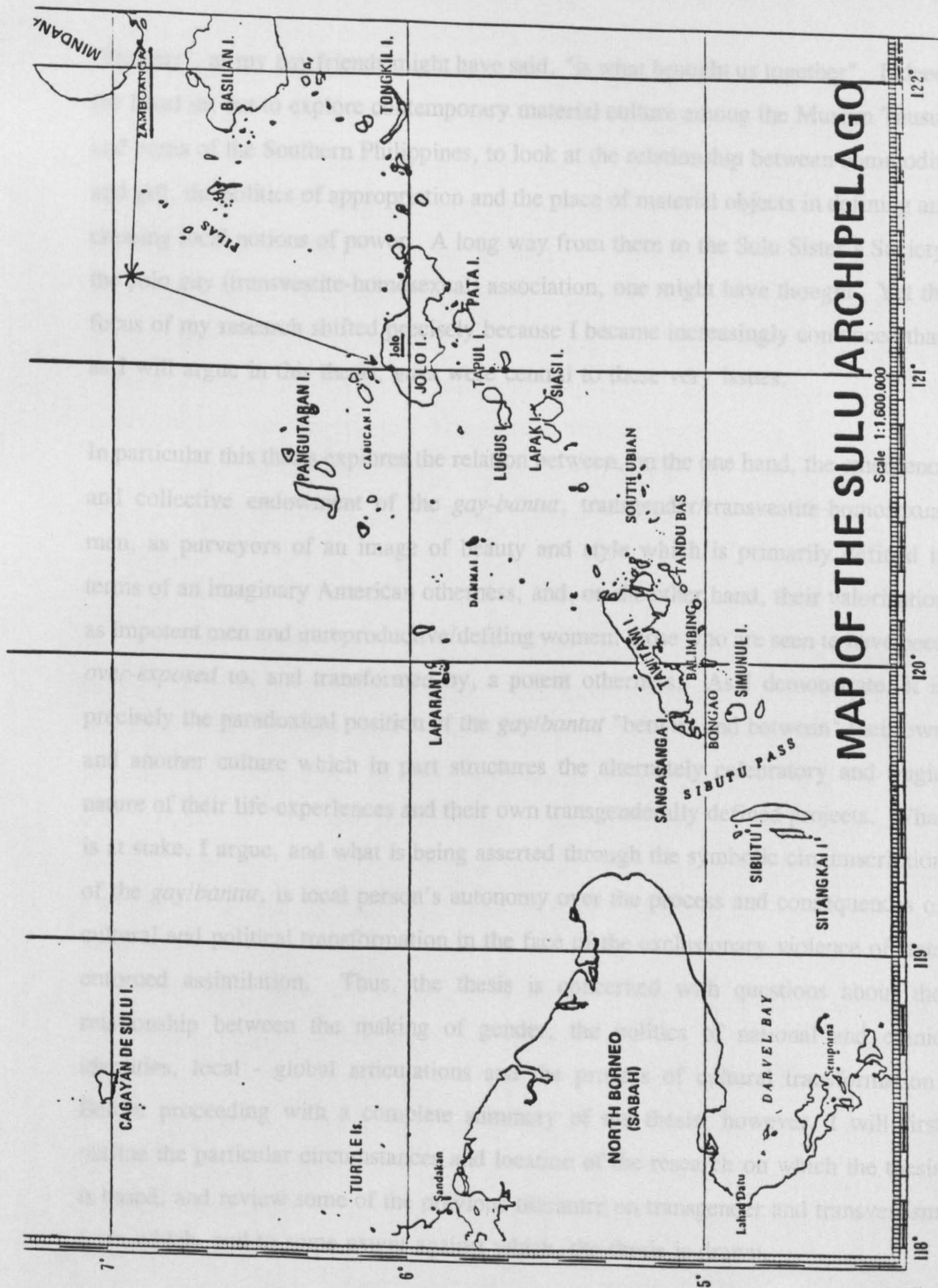


Figure 1.3 Detailed Map of Sulu.



Chapter 1. Beauty and Power: Introduction and Summary.

"Destiny", as my *gay* friends might have said, "is what brought us together". Indeed, for I had set out to explore contemporary material culture among the Muslim Tausug and Sama of the Southern Philippines, to look at the relationship between commodity and gift, the politics of appropriation and the place of material objects in defining and creating local notions of power. A long way from there to the Sulu Sister's Society, the Jolo *gay* (transvestite-homosexual) association, one might have thought. Yet the focus of my research shifted precisely because I became increasingly convinced that, as I will argue in this thesis, *gays* were central to these very issues.

In particular this thesis explores the relation between, on the one hand, the emergence and collective endowment of the *gay-bantut*, transgender/transvestite-homosexual men, as purveyors of an image of beauty and style which is primarily defined in terms of an imaginary American otherness, and, on the other hand, their valorization as impotent men and unproductive/defiling women: those who are seen to have been *over-exposed* to, and transformed by, a potent otherness. As I demonstrate, it is precisely the paradoxical position of the *gay/bantut* "betwixt and between" their own and another culture which in part structures the alternately celebratory and tragic nature of their life-experiences and their own transgenderally defined projects. What is at stake, I argue, and what is being asserted through the symbolic circumscription of the *gay/bantut*, is local person's autonomy over the process and consequences of cultural and political transformation in the face of the exclusionary violence of state enforced assimilation. Thus, the thesis is concerned with questions about the relationship between the making of gender, the politics of national and ethnic identities, local - global articulations and the process of cultural transformation. Before proceeding with a complete summary of the thesis, however, I will first outline the particular circumstances and location of the research on which the thesis is based, and review some of the previous literature on transgender and transvestism from which, and to some extent against which, the thesis is drawn.

1.1 Field Research: Background and Methodology.

This thesis is based on original ethnographic research carried out over an approximately eighteen month period from January 1991 to July 1992 in Zamboanga City, Zamboanga del Sur, a medium sized city with a population of approximately 500,000, 77% of which is non-Muslim, and the town of Jolo, on the Island of Jolo, Sulu Province with a population of approximately 55,000, 90% of which is Muslim (Figures 1.1 - 1.3).¹ I was accompanied to the Philippines by my wife, Heidi, and our two sons, Elliott (then 4) and David (then 2). The research was roughly divided into two periods. The first six months research was primarily spent language learning, whilst doing initial surveys of household consumption practises in the small Muslim Tausug and Sama community of Paniran in the port area of Zamboanga City. More importantly it was during this time that I became interested in the *gay/bantut* (transgender - homosexual men), largely owing to the influence of one of my language informants (see Chapters 2 and 5 below), who took me along to several *gay* beauty contests.

However, after the first three or four months I became increasingly dissatisfied with the field work situation in Zamboanga. This was for several reasons. One reason was that I found Zamboanga City too large a place to formulate a coherent community based research strategy, particularly as we were living in a flat in the centre of the city which was predominately Christian Filipino. Moreover, despite the fact that I was already beginning to focus my research on the *bantut* and *bakla'/bayot* (the latter terms used by Tagalog and Visayan speaking persons with reference to *gay* transvestites) of which there are significant numbers in Zamboanga (as throughout the rest of the Philippines), I was primarily interested in the meaning and experience of the *bantut* in Muslim Tausug and Sama communities.

Thus, I decided to move to the mainly Muslim town of Jolo, Sulu. The only difficulty was that, partially because of the cost involved in preparing suitable accommodation and partly because of our concern with the 'peace and order' situation of Jolo, Heidi and our sons remained in Zamboanga. I arranged to stay on my own in Jolo under the auspices of a local *barangay* (community) councillor in the

community of Takut-Takut at the 'Family Life Centre' sponsored by the Notre Dame de Jolo community extension services. I took most of my meals with the councillor's family, whilst his two eldest sons usually stayed with me at nights for protection.² This proved to be extremely satisfactory, perhaps most of all to my anthropologically engrained sense of what "real" ethnographic research should be, although I made trips back to Zamboanga about once a fortnight to spend three or four days with my family who were well taken care of by our friends and neighbours in Zamboanga. However, because David (our youngest son) was almost constantly ill with various respiratory infections, Heidi, Eliott and David, left the Philippines at the beginning of 1992 to avoid further illness, whilst I finished up the last months of research in Jolo on my own.

Although by the time I arrived in Jolo, I had basically decided to concentrate my field research on the *gay/bantut*, I did not immediately begin pursuing this line of research. Whilst not deliberately planned as such, in the long run this proved to be the right thing to do, for I am inclined to think that had I immediately began hanging out and spending many hours with the *gay/bantut*, as I later did, my research may not have been taken seriously. As it was, apart from the usual questioning of my purpose or intent (*maksud*) in being in Jolo, many persons, (including my host and his family) seemed somewhat bemused when I began to focus my attention on the *gay/bantut*. Such behaviour is generally associated with younger unmarried men and when taken to excess is seen as vulgar and potentially polluting, and their reactions provided some enlightening if slightly uncomfortable moments and discussions (see Chapter 7).

Most of the thesis derives from traditional ethnographic methods, including informal dialogue, life-history interviews (see Appendix B), observation and participation, although I use the latter term loosely to indicate both my constitutive part of the context of dialogue and of the practises which I observed, even when I was not myself, a literal participant in specific activities. In fact, several of my *gay/bantut* friends complained that if I really wanted to understand them, I should sleep with them, which I was unwilling to do. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that part of the dynamic of research, particularly in discussions with *gays* about their

sexuality, was informed by the fact that I was, or appeared to be, appropriated as a potential lover (*kursinada*).

I also conducted three survey-questionnaires; the first, a survey of the 15 beauty parlours in the town of Jolo and the *gay* beauticians working in them (see chapter 8), the second, a survey of 244 individuals on a variety of issues focused around personal consumption, including questions about attitudes and opinions about *gay/bantut* and use of beauty parlours (see particularly Chapters 8 and 9, and Appendices C and D) and the third, a survey of household consumption, decoration and interiors (approximately 100 households in all) although I have not used this data in the thesis. Where I have used quantitative data from these surveys (including data from the National Statistics Office), it has mainly been to support and illustrate ethnographic points raised in the text, rather than to statistically test a particular hypothesis.

1.2 An overview of Jolo’s social-geography.

The town of Jolo, which is where most of my research was conducted, occupies a central place in Sulu’s social geography, not least because the Island of Jolo (*Lupa’ Sug*) remains, for the Muslim Tausug at least, the major population centre and, together with Islam, a primary symbolic point of identification, as is shown by Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1.1 Population by ‘mother tongue’.
(Taken from Table 10. of National Statistics Office, Manila)

Province of Sulu, pop. 469,508		Town of Jolo, pop. 52,903	
Tausug	88%	Tausug	95%
Sama	10%	Sama	2%
Other Philippine	2%	Other Philippine	3%

Table 1.2 Population by religious affiliation.
(Taken from Table 5. of National Statistics Office, Manila)

Sulu Province		Town of Jolo	
Muslim	96%	Muslim	90%
Roman Catholic	1%	Roman Catholic	8%
Other Christian	1%	Other Christian	1%
Not Stated	2%	Not Stated	1%

Although according to 'mother tongue' 95% of the population is Tausug, it is important to note that only 90% of the town's population is Muslim. Traditionally, to be Tausug was to be Muslim, and in fact most Tausug (the majority of whom are Muslim) deny that it is possible to be Tausug and be anything other than Muslim. Thus, for instance, persons who identify themselves as Tausug, either because they were born in Jolo or because their first language is Tausug, will not be considered a real Tausug by local Muslims if they are also Christians. However, as Frake (1981) suggests to characterize local Muslim identity simply as another variant of *masuk malayu* (to enter into, become Malay through conversion into, adoption of Islam) neither fully accounts for the very different kind of historical processes which has structured the formation of an ethnic Muslim identity (*bangsa muslim*, people of Islam), nor does it account for the particular historical and cultural processes at work in the internal ethno-linguistic differentiation drawn by Muslims in Sulu between the Tausug and Sama (the latter a covering term for a wide variety of culturally and linguistically diverse groups) (cf. Pallesen 1981).

For the present, however, it is sufficient to note that in the town of Jolo, the majority of persons identify themselves as Muslim Tausug (approximately 88% taking into consideration both ethno-linguistic and religious affiliation), as opposed either to Christian Filipinos (8%) or the mainly Muslim Sama (2%), the latter of whom usually only claim an identity separate from the Muslim Tausug either along the margins of the local social-geography (cf Stone 1962:125-127; Arce 1983) or, as is the case with the Pangutaran Sama, within the confines of their own particular island localities. In addition there is a small (less than 1%) mainly mercantile Chinese population that retains an identity separate from that of the other three ethnic groups.

The main reason for the presence of Christian Filipino's in Jolo is due to its historical position as the former seat of the Sulu Sultanate and more importantly its position as the administrative and political center for the province of Sulu within the colonial and post-colonial Philippine State. Indeed, most major political figures (who are now mainly Muslim) in the province have second homes in the municipality of Jolo or in a subdivision of the neighbouring municipality of Patikul. Moreover, as the principal

port for the province, most people as well as goods going in and out of Sulu and the southernmost province of Tawi-Tawi, at some time or another pass through the town, and many people refer to it as *tiangi' sug* - (*sug's* marketplace). It is around these axis (political office, the port and the market place) that power and wealth have historically been located and distributed.

Conceptually a division runs between the *gimba* (hinterlands), which from the vantage point of the town of Jolo refers to anything lying beyond the limits of the town itself, and the *higad* (coastline), referring to the ocean, and by extension the numerous islands (*kapu'an*) which are an essential part of Jolo's periphery. This division marks out the two main productive orientations (at least in terms of population as whole), namely fisheries and agriculture whose produce passes through the town of Jolo. There is no industry to speak of apart from construction. However, the *kapu'an* (islands), as well as the *gimba* (interior hinterlands) are also seen as ancestral origin points, so that people in the town will make continual reference to a place in the *gimba* or, more rarely since it is often associated with the Sama, to one of the islands (*pu'*), as being the place from which one's family came or moved from. Further, there is, in most cases, a continuing relationship maintained with this originating point as, amongst other things, it is seen as the primary source for the *ilmu' sin kamaasan* - the knowledge/power or potency of the elders or forbears (*kamaas-maasan*).

To the south is Sabah, Malaysia, an important source of consumer goods in Sulu's 'barter trading' network, an important destination for *TNT* (*tago-ang-tago*) illegal immigrant workers who are unable to go 'abroad' (that is to the Middle East or elsewhere) as contract workers and part of the greater Malay-Muslim region with which local persons sometimes associate. The government in Sabah was in fact an important political ally for Muslim leaders, particularly at the height of the separatist movement in the 1970's. To the north is Zamboanga, which whilst having a sizeable Muslim population is also the gateway to the rest of the Philippines, which is primarily conceptualized along ethnic-religious lines as the world of the *Bisaya'*. This term is used in opposition to Muslim to refer to any Christian Filipinos, whatever part of the Philippines they are from and whatever sect of Christianity they

adhere to. Moreover, not only does the term *Bisaya* have historical connotations of slavery, servitude and colonization, but also and perhaps more importantly is associated with the continuing presence of the Philippine Armed Forces in the town of Jolo itself.³

Beyond these two boundaries, Malaysia and the Christian Philippines, lies the rest of the outside world, the world *abroad*, to which frequent mention is made. In particular, there are two primary significant others with whom people most actively engage; the world of Islam and the Arab to the west, and the world of the *Milikan* (the local transliteration of American, although in fact it is often used to reference any white foreign other), which conceptually lies to the east. More than just places to which persons aspire to go and work abroad, each is seen as a source of knowledge-power or potency (*ilmu*', see Chapter 3 below), the knowledge-power of Islam (*ilmu' Islam*) on the one hand, and the knowledge-power of the American (*ilmu' milikan*) on the other. The point is that for many persons in Sulu the town of Jolo serves not just as an entry and exit point for goods going in and out of the islands, nor simply as a centre for the concentration of economic and political power, but also as a centre for the appropriation of these several sources of knowledge-power: a focal point for the ongoing formulation and reformulation of local Muslim identity which informs, as it has been informed by, the wider contingencies of local and regional political history.

As Warren (1987) notes, Sulu lies very much along the edge of Southeast Asian history, both geographically and lineally, although as Wolter's (1982:3) has suggested this does not mean that persons living there perceived things this way. Sulu was one of the last in the chain of Muslim trading states which sprung up during the first half of the second millennium A.D., expanding most during the 18th and early 19th century when most other coastal polities were in decline. It was also one of the last polities in island Southeast Asia to be defeated by a colonial power, successfully resisting the Spanish for three hundred years until 1876. In fact, the *Moros* (a derogatory term first used by the Castilians in reference to the Muslims of Sulu and more recently reappropriated by local persons in the 1970's to signal their resistance

to the Philippine state) were never fully integrated into the Spanish colonial state. The Americans, who replaced the Spanish in Sulu in 1898, were only moderately more successful in implementing their "mandate" after ruthlessly pursuing a policy of disarmament which lasted until 1913.

The events of the late 19th and beginning of the 20th century have had profound implications for the people of Sulu, economically, politically and culturally, not least of which was the dismantling of the Sultanate, the opening up of schools and colleges and the legal incorporation of Sulu into the Philippine State, which I discuss in more detail below (see Chapters 2 and 4). In many ways some local persons and institutions are still very much in a war of attrition with the Philippine government, whilst others are simply attempting to come to terms with what is sometimes regarded to be the cultural impositions of what is regarded to be a hostile State. Still others are more concerned that the institutions of the State are not operational and have failed, as it were, to deliver the promised goods, including education, democracy, etc., but have simply bolstered the power and influence of strong men (*tau kusug*) whilst contributing to the break down of traditional customary law (*adat*) in a region which whilst not poverty stricken has some of the highest rates of illiteracy, infant mortality (for recent trends cf. Sulu Provincial Profile [National Statistics Office 1990] and the Annual Report of the Regional Health Office #9 [1991]). All of these things contributed to the rise of separatist movements and the reappropriation and reinvention of the term Moro by the MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front) in the construction of an ethno-national Filipino Muslim (*bangsa moro*) identity in the 1970's and 1980's. More recently still are the Abu Sayyef, a militant Islamist group pressing for complete autonomy from the Philippine government and full institution of *sharia* (Qur'anic law). It is this nexus of Islam and America, against the backdrop of enforced assimilation, and systematic neglect, by the Christian Philippine state, which provides the historical context within which not only the recent political violence, but also, as I will argue, the emergence and engenderment of the *gay/bantut* in the town of Jolo must be understood.

2.3 Transvestites and transgendering: A review of the literature.

Although transvestism / transgendering is only one part of the thesis, it is a central part, and it is necessary to briefly outline, and locate my own interpretation of transvestism / transgendering, within some of the comparative ethnographic and theoretical literature. I would just make a preliminary note here about the terms *gay* and *bantut* (which I have italicized throughout the text) in local usage in order to clarify any possible misunderstandings concerning references to the *gay/bantut* as transvestite and transgender-homosexual men. Whereas in Britain or North America the categories of transsexualism, transvestism and homosexuality are carefully distinguished (at least in clinical and gay/lesbian, if not in mainstream, discourse) in most parts of the Philippines as throughout much of this region and in much of the ethnographic literature cited below, such distinctions are blurred (see Chapter 5-7 below).⁴ When not directly speaking about the *gay/bantut* I have employed the term transgender to try and capture as much as possible the various transformations of gender and sexuality which the *gay/bantut* represent and which are involved in the projects *gay/bantut* articulate (cf. Weston 1993: 354).⁵

In early anthropological writing focused around the Native American *berdache*, various forms of transgendering and transvestism were seen as a means for creating an acceptable niche or way of glossing over deviant sexuality in traditional societies (Devereux 1937; 1961). This approach has been criticised and challenged, amongst others, by Whitehead (1981) who argued with respect to the Native North America *berdache*, that transvestism / transgendering was not about same-sex sexuality, but about occupation. Becoming a *berdache*, she suggested, was an alternate route to achieving social status and prestige, which as Whitehead and Ortner (1981) otherwise contended, were in many instances more important than sexuality in defining gender (cf. also Moore 1988). In fact, as I will demonstrate in the thesis, social status and mobility is an important if rarely actualized aspect of *gay*'s expressed transgenderal project, but this perspective is itself theoretically limiting since, amongst other things, it tends to gloss over the issue of sexuality completely.

I cite Devereux's theory here, however, because it was the approach Peacock (1968) employed to explain the appeal and centrality of transvestite performers in the Indonesian *ludruk* theatre, whose refined singing, he suggested, placed a cloak of artistic legitimacy over their illicit sexuality. Peacock's analysis focused on the commercialized proletarian *ludruk* performances in urban Surabaya, Eastern Java in the early 1960's. *Ludruk*, Peacock argued, represented a rite of modernization, a dramatic form, consisting of set piece drama sketches, songs and comic interludes, which both reflected and actively contributed to realignments in the social perceptions and orientations of the audience and actors. In particular, Peacock suggested, *ludruk* was about the shift from traditional values of hierarchy expressed amongst other things in contrasting aesthetic values of the refined and the vulgar (*alus/kasar*) to modern values as expressed in the contrasting notions of progress and backwardness (*madju/kuna*).

These two contrasting sets of values were articulated both in the plot lines of drama sketches (the M or modern plot and the T or traditional plot), in which the aesthetic and hierarchical values of the conservative regime of tradition were seen to give way to the new progressive regime of modernity and democracy, and in the shows two central figures, the refined transvestite singer and the vulgar clowns. Peacock suggested that the dramatic pieces provided models for social action, whilst the coarse clown, who articulated the local concerns of 'everyman', provided cathartic release for the dispossessed proletarian audience undergoing rapid social change. By contrast, Peacock argued, the refined transvestite singer, who sang as idealistically about progress as they formerly did about love, seduced the audience into believing the promise of modernity, soothing and carrying them along by tying together and covering over unconscious and repressed sexual fantasies with aesthetically refined dramatic forms and state ideology.

In many ways the transvestite performances in *ludruk* as analyzed by Peacock provide an important comparative precedent and analogy with the *gay/bantut* and their 'role' as purveyors of beauty and mediatory figures in the process of cultural transformation which I will be discussing in this thesis. However, to explain the power of the

transvestite performances following Freud and Devereux in terms of transgressive and otherwise repressed infantile sexuality and desire, I think undermines an otherwise important and convincing argument. Specifically, it fails to adequately consider the cosmological position of transvestites in local traditions as figures of unity and hierarchical encompassment, a point which I return to below.

Another approach to transvestism was proposed by Levy (1971) who suggested that the transvestite Tahitian *mahu* provided a foil of true masculinity, an example, for would-be real men in the community, of what masculinity is not. This is similar in many ways to Wikan's (1977) analysis of the Omani *xanith*. The *xanith* (glossed as transsexuals), she argued, represented a third gender role for men who had as of yet been unable to demonstrate their masculinity in recognized heterosexual intercourse, and whose femininity was defined in terms of prostitution and not in terms of either virginity or maternity. More recently Mageo (1992, but see also Shore 1981) has argued along similar lines that the transvestite Samoan *fa'afafine* not only provides a negatively inscribed image of masculinity, but also of femininity: a buffer against the erosion of culturally idealized notions of traditional feminine conduct in the face of rapid social transformation.

This perspective has a certain resonance with the *gay/bantut*, who I suggest, are conventionally engendered as neither men nor women. However, an important critique of this approach comes from Garber's (1993) recent and much acclaimed (at least in literary circles) work on transvestism, *Vested Interest: Cross Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*, in which she explores the continual appearance and, she suggests, increasing preoccupation with transvestite figures in Great Britain and North America. Garber (1993:9) begins by noting the tendency both in popular as well as in more theoretically informed discourse to "look through rather than at the cross-dresser." By this she means that transvestites have been appropriated and subsumed within cultural studies as a means of addressing other categories, whether, as is often the case, it is masculinity and femininity, or whether it is class, ethnicity, modernity, etc.

For Garber (1993:16-17), the proper starting point for an analysis is not with the categories against which the transvestite figure is defined, but the way in which the third (although not a third category she insists) calls into question the categories themselves. Transvestism according to Garber interrupts the binary and is an index of category crises; "a failure of definitional distinctions, a borderline that becomes permeable, that permits of border crossings from one (apparently distinct) category to another: black/white, jew/christ, noble/bourgeois, master/servant, master/slave." These category crises and their "transvestite effects", she argues, are both a focus for cultural anxiety and a locus for cultural reformulation, making them the subject of varied and competing interests. Indeed, Garber (1993:17) contends, the real potency of the transvestite figure is the way in which they continually resist attempts to comprehend them, for finally, they represent "a space of possibility, structuring and confounding culture".

In many ways the arguments Garber makes about transvestite figures in America and Britain provide an important starting point for this thesis in as much as I suggest that the *gay/bantut* are figures who have become central to the imagining and reformulation of, social boundaries and identities; whether ethnic-religious, gendered or class. The challenge Garber's work raises for the thesis is to avoid simplistically reducing transvestism / transgendering to one or several of these categories. However, Garber's argument itself is reductionistic, and there are several critical points I would raise with respect to her approach here.

While throughout her text we read of transvestite figures, transvestite effects, transvestite functions, very little is made of the lives of actual transvestites or transsexuals. Garber (1993:67 *passim*) rejects, for instance, any suggestion that transgendering may be, as in Whitehead's (1981) analysis of the *berdache*, about actual status transformation (which she describes as "progress narrative's"). She also rejects the suggestion that transvestites have a meaning specific to a particular historical or cultural context. Instead, she posits transvestites as universal "aesthetic and psychological agents of destabilization, desire, and fantasy (Garber 1993:71)", transvestism and transgendering reduced finally to the realm of literary or aesthetic

psycho-sexuality, that which escapes cultural categories, but which makes the reformulation of cultural categories possible.

As Butler (1990:79 *passim*) following Foucault (1976) suggests, however, there is no subject, no body, sex or gender, prior both to the repressive constraints and generative power of culture. In fact, Butler uses the insights drawn from Foucault to critique his own reading of the diaries of Herculine, a nineteenth-century French hermaphrodite (Foucault 1980a). As Butler (1990:94) notes, Foucault (like Garber), "appears to romanticize h/er world of pleasures as the 'happy limbo of a non-identity', a world that exceeds the categories of sex and of identity." As a result, he "fails to recognize the concrete relations of power that both construct and condemn Herculine's sexuality." The point is that if transvestites, hermaphrodites or other transgender categories occupy a space of desire and possibility, of un-decidability, then they do so no less as socially and historically constituted subjects, than those who inhabit the conventional space which Garber claims they interrupt.

Cornwall's (1994) account of Brazilian *travesti's* provides a useful illustration of Butler's point. Drawing on Butler's (1990) performative theory of gender, she emphasizes the way in which in a variety of domains, including prostitution and the ritual space of *Candomble*, *travesti's* call into question and dislocate conventional and analytical gender categories such as between active and aggressive masculinity (*activo*) and passive and penetrated femininity and feminine masculinity (*passivo*). At the same time, Cornwall demonstrates how this space itself has been historically constituted and has been crucial to the extension and reinstatement of gendered relations of power. This in turn has very real implications for the lives of individual *travestis*, many of whom continue to be the subject of violent abuse (Cornwall 1994: 117, 131) at the hands of what she calls 'hegemonic masculinity'.⁶

There is, however, another equally important, if more traditional, anthropological point, which follows on from this critique of Garber's work and which I have already hinted at with respect to Peacock: that is, to question the usefulness and validity of a universalizing psychoanalytic semiotics in cross-cultural analysis. Garber's

transvestite figure inhabits a cultural world where identity, including sex and gender, is premised on the basis of dualism, and where transactions between persons are conceptualized in terms of opposition and distinction. In such a scheme, the transvestite figure necessarily lies outside of or along the margins of what appears to be the inter-subjective, the space of what, following Freud and Lacan, Garber calls the primal [primitive?] scene.

However, there are other possibilities. One can posit a cultural world in which identity is premised on the basis of holism, and where transactions between persons are conceptualized in terms of complementarity and encompassment (Dumont 1972; Marriot 1976). In such a situation, as Nanda (1990:23 *passim*) argues is the case with the South Asian transvestite Hijra, sexually ambiguous figures are considered to be sacred beings, figures of divinity and generativity, or, as Errington (1989:124; 1990:52) suggests with respect to transvestites in the traditionally 'Indicized' states of Island Southeast Asia, embodiments of ancestral potency and cosmic unity. If transvestite figures were constructed as liminal figures in Southeast Asia, then the boundary they signalled and mediated was between the world of divinity and ancestral potency, and the mundane world of human being. In fact, in both of these regions transvestites have historically appeared not along the margins of society, but rather as entrusted guardians of state regalia, members of the royal entourage, sacred personages, healers and ritual specialists (Van der Kroef 1954).⁷

In Sulawesi amongst the Buginese and Makassarise, transgender men sometimes became shamans, called *bissu*, who were characterized by ritual transvestism (Hamonic 1966). Pelras (forthcoming) in his introduction to the *bissu* clergy amongst the Buginese, suggests,

As priests, shamans and specialists of trance rituals, they [the *bissu*] mediated between mankind and the world of gods: they had as mystic spouses heavenly beings.

Whilst there is no way to know for certain whether or not the *bissu* clergy mentioned in the epic Buginese text *La Galigo*, which recounts the founding of noble houses in Sulawesi, refers to transvestite *bissu* or to women *bissu*, called *kuneng lolo*, he

suggests that historical evidence supports a view that the majority of the *bissu* were mainly transvestite-homosexuals, generically known as *calabai*. Becoming a *bissu* involved a call from a supernatural being who became the *bissu*'s mystic spouse - a male spirit in the case of female *bissu* - and both a male and female in the case of the transvestite homosexual *bissu*. The *bissu* were responsible for rites surrounding childbirth and weddings, especially for the white blooded nobility, and they were in the past at least keepers and guardians of the royal regalia or *arajang*, objects possessed by potency.⁸

Elsewhere in island Southeast Asia, even in those areas on the peripheries of 'indicization' transvestite figures appear to function as a metaphor for cosmic unity and incorporation. Writing about the *basir*, transvestite -homosexual men who were ritual specialist and prostitutes amongst the Ngadju of Kalimantan (S. Borneo) , Scharer (1963:58) says:

Classified cosmologically, they stand between Upperworld and Underworld. More than this, they are Upperworld and Underworld together, they are Mahatala and Jata, Maharaja Sangiang and Maharaja Buno. They are the total/ambivalent godhead whose totality they represent in the community. . . Sacred prostitution [with either the *basir* or *balian*- female priestess] signifies the unity of the individual and of the whole community with the bisexual godhead.

In areas of the Philippines, a similar configuration of male transvestism is also well documented. Juan de Plascencia's, *Customs of the Tagalogs* published in 1589 and a report by Fray Juan Francisco de San Antonio written in 1793 both include notes on *bayoquin* who were *babaylan*- that is effeminate/transvestite men who were priest to a "hermaphrodite god" (cited in Fleras nd.). The Spanish missionaries Francisco Combes in an account published in Madrid in 1667 (translated and reproduced in Blair and Robertson 1900, vol 40:160-64) refers to a 'class' of men called *labia* amongst the Subanon (peoples who lived scattered along the Zamboanga peninsula) who he describes as follows:

Their dress is throughout like that of women, with skirts of the same fashion. They do not use weapons, or engage in anything else that is peculiar to men, or communicate with them. They weave the mantas that are used here, which is the proper employment of women, and all their conversation is with women. . . They were, so to speak, hermits

of their religion, and were held in high esteem.⁹

Perez in a document dated 1680 provides an even more vivid description of cross dressed *bayoc* priests in Playa Honda, Luzon (Blair and Roberston, 1900, vol. 47; cited in Murray 1992d:185-192).

The priest is called bayoc, and he dresses like a woman. He wears a tapis, or apron, and ties up his hair like a woman, although above the tapis he wears and girds his catan on the left side, and on the right side his yua [dagger] as other men [do]. Those are the weapons of all these Indians and no one goes without them, even though it be within his own house. The idol to whom this bayoc primarily offers sacrifices is called Malyari, which means "powerful."

The point is that transvestites did not, in Garber's terms, call into question cultural categories, precisely because they were the embodiments of a conceptual order in which the ability to incorporate seemingly opposed elements was read as a sign of potency, something for which persons strove to achieve, rather than attempted to redefine and recategorize. This was of course no less an ideological construct which formed, as it was informed by, various vested interests, and it is perhaps not surprising that in more hierarchical parts of Island Southeast Asia transvestites were associated with, and entrusted as, the guardians of the royal regalia. Specifically, transvestites appear to have been invested as a picture, and endowed with some of the potency, of what Errington (1987) following Anderson (1972), calls the 'wishfully autonomous' rulers/houses, who claimed to absorb and encompasses all things within themselves.¹⁰

This I would suggest is precisely the missing element in Peacock's analysis of *ludruk*. Peacock notes that the transvestite singers did not confine themselves to presenting a single classification, nor did they follow the syncretic 'melting pot' pattern imputed to cultural groups in Southeast Asia. Not only did transvestite singers set forth two distinct symbolic classifications of separate origins and traditions, i.e. the refined and the progressive (*alus and madju*), but they expressed both at the same time, although in different forms. Moreover, Peacock notes that in seeming contradiction to the refined transvestite singer, another transvestite songstress - whom Peacock calls the 'sucking whore' - is a coarse figure who mixes children's songs with oral sexual

imagery. Thus, as Peacock (68:203) says:

The transvestite is *ludruk*'s most illicit figure. He is also *ludruk*'s most alus (refined) figure. The transvestite singer covers himself with far more alus symbolism than does any other *ludruk* character. Further the 'sucking whore' who displays the most explicit illicit imagery of any transvestite singer [] also displays the purest alus imagery of any transvestite. He is the only transvestite who presents intact a pure imitation of alus art. Ordinary transvestites insert shreds of alus songs and dances into their songs and dances, but the harlot, after singing children's songs, renders entire classical songs, such as *Kinanti*'.

I would suggest, however, that a more culturally sensitive interpretation would be opened up simply by inserting the term *kasar* (vulgar) in place of the term illicit in the above paragraph, with the attendant assumptions drawn from psychoanalysis.¹¹ The point is, I would argue, that the transvestite does not represent the repressed infantile fantasies of the audience, but rather, as in *Wayang* traditions where *Semar*, the vulgar hermaphrodite clown and older brother of the gods, is juxtaposed both to *Arjuna* (the refined prince of the Mahabarata) and *Bhatara Guru* (the god of the upperworld, Siva) (cf. Keeler 1987:205-13; Ulbricht 1970), the transvestite in *ludruk* appears as both: a figure or metaphor of hierarchical encompassment and incorporation, although redeployed in urban *ludruk* performances as spokesperson of state ideology and national identity. In fact, as Anderson (1972: 14 *passim*) demonstrates, Sukarno's rhetoric (which is on the whole what the transvestite singers were proclaiming in *ludruk*) was one of incorporation, of an ideology and person greater than and able to embrace the sum of its parts, be they communist, nationalist, bourgeoisie, proletarian, Muslim, etc, thus reviving an older and much longer running image of political leadership which, amongst other things, was objectified in the archetypal transvestite *ardahani* image. The transvestite appears then not simply as liminal figures in the interstices of tradition and modernity, but more particularly as a transformation, and transfiguration, of the sacred in terms of the Indonesian nation-state.¹²

It is precisely this re-emergence and redeployment of transvestites and transvestism within the context of recent historical events in Southeast Asia, and in Sulu in

particular, which is a central concern of the thesis, and which, despite her important insights, elides Errington's (1990) largely ahistorical account, lodged as it is in the (much lamented by her) bygone days of the former 'Indic' states. On the one hand, as I will demonstrate, whilst the situation that obtained with respect to transvestites in some historical Indonesian and Philippine societies cannot be directly mapped onto Sulu, there are analogies and parallels which can be drawn between them. Amongst other things, the *bantut* were and still are part of a wider regional performative tradition that includes transvestites singers and dancers. Moreover, despite the lack of transvestite and/or hermaphroditic characters in local mythology, there are other symbolic connections which suggest that the *bantut* were engendered as figures of ancestral potency and the unity of kinship groupings.

On the other hand, as I will also demonstrate, there has been a semantic shift in the meaning and redeployment of the *bantut* away from being metaphors of ancestral unity towards being, in Garber's terms, an index of, and mediatory figures for, the reformulation, and constitution of local Muslim identity. This can be seen for instance in the valorization of *gay/bantut* bodies and sexuality: the *bantut* negatively defined not simply as a category of impotent men and unrealizable women, but as persons who have been overwhelmed by a potent cultural other - an alter-identity defined in terms of American style and the penetration of the Christian Philippine State. It is in this sense that the *gay/bantut* might be considered symbolic foils of gendered ethnic identities: identities which themselves have become valorized over the course of several hundred years, in contrast to and in conflict with, successive colonial governments.

However, this does not mean that *gay/bantut* cease to be figures of incorporation. The *gay/bantut* have been collectively endowed as the creative producers of beauty, who enable, particularly for the wealthy, educated and political elite, the reformulation and reinvention of local cultural forms within a, primarily American defined, global forum of images and styles. In this respect the *gay/bantut* remain figures of potency associated with status-hierarchy, although they are denied the possibility of realizing such status for themselves. As I will demonstrate, it is

precisely the paradoxical position of the *gay/bantut*, who are constituted as the embodiment of an outside cultural other, within and for, but never completely accepted by, their own culture, which structures the contradictory and sometimes tragic nature of *gay* experiences and of *gay*'s expressed transgenderal projects and intentionalities.

1.4 Thesis Summary.

The thesis is roughly divided into three sections. Section one provides an introduction to the themes of beauty and power within an ethnographic and historical framework. Section two is concerned both with the way in which the *gay/bantut* are conventionally engendered and with *gay*'s articulation of their own transgenderally defined projects. Section three picks up again on the theme of beauty, both as articulated and mediated by *gay/bantut* in beauty parlours, in everyday consumption practises, and in the different readings of beauty which emerge from *gay* beauty contests. The thesis concludes with a final look at the comparative literature on transvestites from the perspective of this particular ethnography.

Section One (Chapters 2-4): Ethnographic Themes and Historical Contexts.

I begin in Chapter 2 (Transvestite Beauty Contests in the Southern Philippines), where in a literal sense my interest in the *gay*-transvestites first began to take shape, with a mainly descriptive account of the first among several *gay* beauty contests which I attended. This serves both to introduce the reader to some of the images of beauty with which the *gay-bantut* are associated, and through which they define themselves, and as a means for introducing some of the important historical transformations within which the discourse of beauty is critically located. Beauty, I suggest, may be understood as another idiom for, and expression of, the *ilmu' milikan*, (the knowledge-power of the American), and I trace the specific genealogy of colonial and post-colonial institutions which this entails.

In chapter 3 (Potency, Gifting Transactions and Hierarchy in Sulu), I pick up on and outline a more synchronic analysis of *ilmu'* (knowledge-power or potency) and of the

transactional gifting relationships which following local terminology I have called *remembrancing* relations. Drawing on comparative material from other parts of Island Southeast Asia, I argue that *ilmu*' is a local theory of knowledge-power: signalling both an intangible spiritual force, or potency, and a transactional order of relations. The acquisition of *ilmu*' is largely mediated by various forms of gifting relationships. Such gifting relations are not simply the basis of the moral economy of *ilmu*' (knowledge-power or potency), but are more critically linked to the constitution and negotiation of hierarchical social relations.

The symbolic and structural analysis of chapter 3 is juxtaposed with a historical analysis of chapter 4 (History and the Politics of Objectification: The Transformations of Local Identity). This chapter presents an interpretation of the historical movements and transformation in Sulu from the introduction of Islam, the rise and florescence of the Sultanate, to its dissolution and replacement by the American colonial and post-colonial Philippine state. I emphasize both the continuity with the past, the active appropriation of things from the outside which characterize each movement, and the tensions which these movements creates. I focus on the contradiction that arises between the *ilmu*' *Islam* (knowledge-power of Islam) and the *ilmu*' *Milikan* (the knowledge-power of the American): a contradiction which is in part structured by the attempts of successive colonial / post-colonial governments to impose their will on local groups, denying them a constitutive part in this process.

Section Two (Chapters 5-7): Towards an Ethnography of the Gay/Bantut.

In Chapter 5 (The Engenderment of the *Gay/Bantut*), I explore the conventional understanding or protocols within which the *gay/bantut*, and *gay/bantut* sexuality in particular, are engendered. On the one hand, they are defined, as they define themselves, as being like women, both in their appropriation of things gendered feminine and in their desire to be sexually penetrated by real men. On the other hand, however, they emerge in the conventional reading as neither men, nor women: symbolically circumscribed both as impotent men, and as unrealizable women. Whilst this gender ambiguity may be understood in terms of a particular cultural logic which underlies and informs local kinship and gender relations, it is also clear their

ambiguously defined gender status is informed by, and increasingly valorized by, the polarizations of local ethnic-religious identity.

In chapter 6 (*Growing Up Gay: Narrative Themes in Gay Life-Histories*) I explore *gay* life histories relating them to wider processes of engenderment and socialization. What emerges in these accounts, is that, it is not *gay* sexuality, in the first instance, which is seen to define their gayness. Rather it is their identification with women and with things gendered feminine, that are seen, both by the *gays* themselves, as more generally, to be socially formative. Like the development of masculinity, the development of gayness emerges in their accounts as a process of empowerment through transformative appropriation. However, whereas for men, what is highlighted is the appropriation of esoteric knowledge-power defined in terms of Islam, for *gays*, what is highlighted is their appropriation of beauty, style, and glamour. It is within this context that homosexuality, and in particular their first experience of being anally penetrated, becomes a key symbol of gayness. I end by suggesting that there are two seemingly contradictory, never entirely separable, potentialities articulated by *gays*, one emphasizing the celebratory aspects of *gay* empowerment, and the other emphasizing the more tragic, because unfulfilled, aspect of *gay* transgenderal projects.

In chapter 7 (*Imagining Love: An Ethnography of Homosociality and Transgenderal Identities*) I explore *gay* accounts of their sexual relationships with men, and in young men's accounts of their relationship with *gays*. I suggest that *gay* relationships with men, which contrary to popular conventions extend along a fairly wide continuum of sexual play, are understood best when related to the particular reciprocal relations through which they are engaged, and to the various real and imaginary worlds in which they are enacted. This ranges from commoditized sexual relations in Zamboanga and other parts of the Christian Philippines, to idealized "true-love" remembrancing relations, which are conceived in terms of an imaginary American universe. The main point is that these are set against and contrasted to their relations with local Muslim men, who they see (and who see themselves) as always attempting to gain some material advantage, without reciprocating in any way,

sexually, or otherwise.

Section Three (Chapters 8-10): Beauty, Consumption, Political Practise and Gender Transformation.

In chapter 8 (On Beauty and Vulgarly: Beauty Parlours, *Gay/Bantut* Beauticians and the Space of Beauty) I present a descriptive picture of *gay* life in the beauty parlours, which in addition to being an important source of income and prestige is an important locus of affiliation for *gays* in the town of Jolo. It has also become a key part of another aspect of *gay* projects; status transformation, which is linked amongst other things to education and obtaining professional qualifications and of which the beauty parlour is seen, as it were, as a step in the right direction. However, work in the beauty parlour is more than simply about *gay* social mobility, but itself provides a primary stage on which *gays* perform and experience a sense of empowerment as the socially endowed repositories and creative producers of beauty and *istyle*. However, as with most of *gay* life, beauty parlours are also a source of ambivalence in the community, viewed at once as a locus of beauty and vulgarity.

In Chapter 9 (Beauty and the Politics of *Istyle*), I elucidate the wider context of the everyday practise of beauty, exploring the notion or sensibility of *istyle*. *Istyle*, like beauty, signals a concern with things defined as American, with goods largely ranked according to their symbolic proximity to America. Class and status is in part reflected in, and is constituted by, not just the embodiment of *original quality* but also by an awareness of, and the ability to discriminate between, different stylistic possibilities. However, unlike Bourdieu's (1984) rather static model of consumption in *Distinction*, grounded in an understanding of class and status growing out of a western sociological tradition, I argue that *istyle* must be understood as part of the everyday political negotiation of hierarchy.

In the final part of chapter 9, I consider the implications of this everyday politics of *istyle* for women. Women are the primary locus for the objectification of local as well as ancestral identity which is embodied amongst other things in *traditional* clothing and gold jewelry. At the same time women are also increasingly expected

to embody *modern istyle*, so that they also emerge as a primary site for the incorporation of new cultural orders. The tension between *adat* (local Muslim tradition), and *istyle* (defined primarily in terms of America) which this articulates, I argue, informs, as it is informed by, the tension women experience between on the one hand their active role in the development and reproduction of kinship and ethnic identity and their desire to establish an identity separate from this. This contradiction has been given added impetus by, as it is increasingly mapped out onto, the possibility of employment abroad; the world abroad associated with a kind of absolute freedom from entangling social relations, inverting what, in *gay* imaginations, functions as the site for the articulation of mutually encompassed/encompassing relations.

In the final chapter, (Negotiating Style and Mediating Beauty: Identity, Cultural Transformation and Transgendering) I bring together the different strands of the thesis in order to indicate some of the various, if partial, connections which might be made with respect to transgendering. First I review the specific historical context and cultural logic within which the *gay/bantut* have been valorized as persons who, having been overwhelmed by the force of political violence and overexposed to a potent cultural otherness, are considered to be neither real men nor real women, masculinity and femininity being in this instance an index of local Muslim identity. I suggest, however, that the *gay/bantut* have been constructed not just as symbolic foils of gendered ethnic identities. Rather, they are mediatory figures collectively endowed as the creative producers of beauty, who, by their participation in the transformation of traditional clothing into such things as "modern native style", enable, most especially, although not exclusively, for the wealthy power-elite, an ongoing process of creolization or localization.

It is against this backdrop that I return to consider the *gay* beauty contests, multi-vocal ritual performances which encapsulates some of the different strategic interests at work in *gay/bantut* transgendering. For *gays*, beauty contests are both about affirming and celebrating their widely acknowledged ability in creating beauty and about contesting the nature of the transformation they see themselves enacting through

the exposure of their beauty: that is the desire not just to be socially accepted as women, but to be recognized as beautiful or refined high status persons. However, just as the audience collectively endows the *gay/bantut* as creative producers of beauty, so too they continually act to undermine their claims to a socially legitimated status.

As in their relationships with *gays* more generally, men approach *gays* in the beauty contests with an admixture of desire and contempt. Similarly, women, in a double-edged manner both identify themselves with the various images of femininity purveyed by the *gays*, and clearly demarcate the boundaries of reproductive and unproductive feminine sexuality which separate them. From another vector of social relations, the wealthy and/or educated political elite, who figure in contests as sponsors and judges, can be seen at once to celebrate, circumscribe and claim possession over the transformative power which the *gay/bantut* are seen to embody. However, such claims do not remain uncontested by the poor, who by identifying the *arte* (glamour) of the *gay/bantut* with the *arte* (glamour) of the wealthy-elite in the beauty contest, both challenge and make claims on the higher status of the elite. From whichever perspective the beauty contest is looked at, however, it is the *gay/bantut* who in the final instance, emerges as those who are systematically excluded from and denied the possibility of realizing a socially accepted status or identity.

Endnotes

1. **Table 1.3 Comparative numbers of Muslims and Christians in Zamboanga City, and the town of Jolo, Sulu** (see section 1.2 and Table 1.1 and 1.2 for further discussion).

Zamboanga City		Jolo, Sulu	
Muslim	24%	Muslim	90%
Roman Catholic	71%	Roman Catholic	8%
Other Christian	5%	Other	2%

[1990 PH-T.5 of Sulu and Zamboanga del Sur Province Census. Manila: National Statistics Office.]

2. Although I never felt in immediate danger myself, my host and his family as well as other friends were quite strict in their instructions about where and when I could and could not safely go without making myself vulnerable to kidnapping, which has become a regular feature of life in Jolo. Although more often directed at local wealthy non-Muslim persons, over the 18 month period we were in Zamboanga City and Jolo, three different groups of foreigners were kidnapped, including missionary friends who were held up on a tour around the town of Jolo.

3. There has been in the last thirty years a substantial decrease in the number of Christian Filipino's in the town of Jolo and in the Chinese population both in absolute and relative percentage as the following data shows.

Table 1.4 Ethnic groups in the town of Jolo 1960 and 1990 (by ethno-linguistic and religious affiliation)

1990			1960 (Based on Arce 1981:11)		
Muslim	47,612	90%	Muslim	23,270	70%
Christian	4,232	8%	Christian	7,335	22%
Chinese	500	1%	Chinese	1,705	5%
Not stated		1%	Others	949	3%
Total	52,903		Total	33,259	

In part this decrease in the number of Christian Filipinos living in the town of Jolo was due to the massive population upheaval during the mid 1970's following on the destruction of the town of Jolo by the Philippine Navy (see Chapter 4). However, while the civilian Christian population, many of whom worked in local government offices were replaced by a new influx of Tausug from the interior of Jolo Island beginning at the end of the 1970's and early 1980's, there still remains a large contingent of Christian Military Personnel. Unfortunately, I do not have any exact statistics on their number. Arce (1981:5), whose research in Jolo was done in the 1960's reports 1200 Armed forces personnel for the province of Sulu as a whole. I should think that there are at present at least this many at present in and around the

town of Jolo alone and probably more taking together the PNP (Philippine National Police), CAFGU (Citizen Armed Force Geographical Units), the Army, Marines and Air Force, not to mention the Navy, who frequently have one or more destroyer size vessels docked in the harbour.

4. This has at least historically been the case. It now appears to be changing particularly in larger more urban areas of Southeast Asia such as Manila and Cebu, where there is an increasing division between gays for whom cross-dressing and other overt transgenderal expressions are not an essential part of their sexual identity and gays for whom this remains an integral part of their self-expression (cf. Williams [1991] on gays in urban areas of Indonesia). In Jolo, there is some evidence of this transition, although as I suggest in more detail below (see Chapter 8), it is tied into pursuit of status-transformation through education and professional occupation as well as notions of class and style. Nevertheless, sexual identity is still overwhelmingly articulated in a transgenderal idiom.

5. The terms transvestite and transsexual, like the terms homosexual and heterosexual are the products of 19th and 20th century scientific discourse: part of what following Foucault (1976) might be called the specie-ization of sexuality. This process continues, one recent sexologist in America identifying five different categories of heterosexual transvestite / transsexuals and four different categories of homosexual transvestite / transsexual (cf. Richard Doctor 1988:9, cited in Garber 1993:132).

6. Similarly, Esther Newton's (1979) now classic ethnography of transvestite drag performers in North America, *Mother Camp*, is another demonstration of the potentially disrupting and denaturalizing effect of transgendering, and, at the same time, of the powerful normative forces which constrain and marginalize as they enable such performances and performers.

7. A similar argument is made by Williams (1992) who, in contradistinction to Whitehead (1981), stresses the sexuality of the Native American *berdache*, but argues that their transgenderal sexuality was part of a holistic cosmological system which did not view it as deviant.

8. Errington (1989:124) notes with regards to the relation of transvestite guardians and the royal regalia in the Buginese royal courts, the *arajang* (royal regalia), like the *bissu* (transvestite ritual guardians) are considered to be ambivalent, potent entities, as the following account from Chabot's (1960:209 cited in Errington 1989: 124) ethnography documents:

According to the description of the ritual, performed at the inauguration of the new head of the *bissu* (Puang Matoa), one of them leads the new head to the ornament of Segeri, a plow, and at this point he makes an announcement the significance of which the assistant reproduced as follows: "It is neither known of the person who is here brought to the sacred object and who touches it, nor of the object, who is the man and who is the woman. If the sacred object is a man, then

this person is a woman, and vice versa."

9. Interestingly, one of the *labia* Combes came accross was in Sulu on Pangutaran. However, although Combes made many other observations about the Tausug and Sama, he does not make any reference to a similar category of men amongst them.

10. Note also that the symbolic sacral ruler (a man) amongst the Atoni was considered female who occupied the centre, inside or root position of the kingdom (Cunningham 1964:54 cited in Waterson 1992:174).

11. Peacock (1968:204) goes some way towards acknowledging this point in a footnote, but does not take it beyond the following observation:

The Javanese case is complicated: "Pure" Javanese tradition does not condemn homosexuality and regards a very wide range of behaviour from he-man to rather (in our terms) "effeminate," as properly masculine. Therefore, Javanese who condemn the transvestite are probably doing so from the standpoint of Javanese masculinity influenced by Islam, but the transvestite legitimizes himself in terms of "pure" (non-Islamized) Javanese ideals.

12. On the transformation of the religious in terms of the nation see Anderson (1983), and see also Hatley (1971, cited in Murray 1992e:269), who suggests that *ludruk* was taken over by the Islamic military regime, with officers acting as 'judges' promoting the best performers.

*Beauty and Power, Part I:
Ethnographic Themes and Historical Contexts.*

Chapter 2. Transvestite (Gay/Bantut) Beauty Contests in the Southern Philippines.

2.1 Introduction: The Local Context of Gay Internationals.

In this chapter I present a descriptive account of a transvestite (*gay/bantut*) beauty contest. This description serves both as means of introducing the reader to the *gay/bantut*, and more importantly as an introduction to the discourse and practise of "beauty", with which the *gay/bantut* are primarily associated. On the one hand, as will be clear from the description which follows, the beauty purveyed in the contests are drawn from a predominately American informed image of glamour and cosmopolitanism. On the other hand, the beauty purveyed in the beauty contest is about education and the English language. In short, beauty is another expression of, and idiom for, the American, and in this chapter I begin to trace the specific colonial and post-colonial genealogy of power which this entails and within which the subject of the thesis is set.

Transvestite beauty pageants are by all accounts an emergent and growing phenomenon in mainland and insular Southeast Asia as well as the Pacific (cf. Mageo 1992; Channel 4 Productions 'Lady Boys'; and Van Esterik, forthcoming), and are ubiquitous throughout most of the Philippines (Cannel 1991: Whitham 1992). In this thesis, however, I am primarily concerned with the meaning of transvestite-gay beauty contests and in particular the meaning and life-experiences of the *gays* themselves within the Muslim Tausug and Sama communities of Zamboanga City and Jolo in the Southern Philippines.

There are two classes of *gay* beauty competitions in Jolo and Zamboanga. These are community (*barangay*) level contests held in the open air and often as not at the community basketball court, and town/city (*municipal*) competitions such as the *Miss Gay International*, Jolo which are usually held in large auditoriums such as the Notre Dame de Jolo College gymnasium. The contest I describe below is a community level contest, although I also attended, and was told about, other town contests. One of the differences between the community and town contests relates to the number and status of financial sponsors and the number and status of the judges, reflecting overall

the greater 'prestige' value of the town contests for the *gay/bantut* contestants. Another difference is in the composition of the audience. In community contests no admission fee will be charged, whereas town competitions may charge anywhere from 10 to 50 pesos depending on the venue. As a result community level competitions will usually attract a much more diverse audience, including poorer persons and children, who might not otherwise pay to attend a downtown contest.

What this does not reflect, however, is a formal system or structure of competitive ranks through which one moves, for instance, from a being a local community winner to municipal, regional, national and thence on to an international arena, although *gays* from Jolo may sometimes travel to Zamboanga to participate in *gay* beauty contests there. Rather what links the otherwise unrelated *gay* beauty pageants together is that it is by and large the same set of *gays* who organize and participate in the several beauty contests which may be held during the course of one year. In fact, the structure of the shows articulates with a much longer performative tradition where the *bantut*, who were and still are regarded as excellent musicians, singers and dancers, would in some instances travel together from village to village or even from island to island performing at wedding celebrations (Nimmo 1978). Kiefer (1967:107) notes, for instance,

An important genre in Tausug music is called *pagsindil* (literally, "to express"). It consists of the stylized singing of courtship repartee by two male and two female professional musicians before an assembled audience (usually at weddings). It is possible for a male singer to sing the female parts, and when this is necessary it is usually a *bantut* singer who takes the role. It is somewhat expected that he will take this role, and - in most cases he seems overtly to derive satisfaction from it.

Bantut are also often accomplished dancers performing a variety of dance styles including both those forms in which genders are segregated, such as the Tausug *pangalay* and the Sama *igal*, as well as dances such as the *dahling-dahling* in which men and women perform together (see Figures 2.1-2.3).¹ Thus, whilst I have been unable to document specific instances from the past or present which directly link the *bantut* either with shamanistic practises or with courtly rituals as in other of the former 'Indic' states, there are clearly comparative precedents for the *bantut* as

musicians and dancers in other parts of island Southeast Asia.² This includes the *taledek* dancers who occasionally performed in the Javanese royal courts and during intermissions of *wajang kulit* performances, the *bedaja* dancers who included boys of noble birth who performed as women at the royal court in Djogjakarta (Peacock 1968:52; Anderson 1972) and (from further afield) the *hijra*, who like the *bantut*, perform at wedding celebrations as well as at births and other religious festivals as a to bring fertility and auspiciousness (Nanda 1990).

Singing and dancing are still considered to be one of the primary talents of the *bantut*. Within the last twenty years, however, transvestite men have emerged in Sulu, as possessors and purveyors of "beauty". Not only have they come to dominate a burgeoning beauty parlour business, but also, in addition to their own beauty contests, are often the principle organizers, orchestrators and choreographers of women's beauty pageants and other similar events such as school talent shows. *Gay* beauty contests often, although not always, coincide with calendrical celebrations such as Hari Raya festivities. However, while contest titles, such as the Miss *Gay* Habena (a part of barangay Bus-Bus in Jolo), will sometimes include the name of the community in its title, most contests are organized around the theme of an international beauty pageant. Recent competition titles in Jolo over the past few years include *Miss Gay World*, *Miss Gay International* and *Search for Miss Gay World*. *Gay* beauty contests are, like the *gay/bantut* themselves who represent various subjectivities, undoubtedly polysemic texts, and I shall be exploring the various ways in which they might be read later in the thesis. Nevertheless, if *gay* beauty contests are ritual performances, then the overall trend towards including "world", "universe" or "international" in the title, is, I will argue in the thesis, indicative of the central focus of these ritual performances; that is, the local constitution and encompassment of a potent and significant global other (Friedman 1990b:321). I begin, however, with a description taken from field notes of one of the first among several (I attended six in all) *gay* beauty contest which I was able to attend, although I was told and heard stories about many others.

2.2 *Miss Gay Super Model* (of the World), 1991.

April 17, 1991

Today was the day of the *Super Gay Model* of the World. I have been told about this contest for weeks now, and for most of the *gays* I know it has overshadowed the Hari Raya festivities marking the end of Ramadan (the Muslim period of fasting and prayers) which concluded just one week ago. Jimmy, my *gay* informant's brother (who was also *gay*), had pre-registered for the contest several weeks previously, paying a 15 Pesos registration fee and filling out a form that looked something like this:

Miss Gay Super Model.

Name: Ms. Regine Valasquez.

Country representing: Ms. Czechoslovakia.

Age: 18.

Height: 5'11".

Vital statistics: 36-24-36.

Star sign: Virgo.

Ambition: To be a certified public accountant CPA.

Personal motto:- "Simplicity is beauty". (Ernie, his brother, had told him to use this)

Ideal man: "tall, handsome, intelligent".

The contestants had been given a list of all the various awards that they would be competing for. In addition to the overall winner and four runners up, prizes were to be awarded in the following categories: best in national costume, best in evening gown, best in cocktail dress; "Miss Lux" - for best in skin complexion (Lux being a brand of soap), Miss Rejoice - for hair (Rejoice being a brand of shampoo). Further prizes included; Promising New Model, Best in Catwalk, Darling of the Crowd, Best Close Up, and "Miss Photogenic".

I picked up Jimmy and Ernie at their home. They were accompanied by two other *gays* who were coming along to support Jimmy rather than participate in the contest

themselves. We didn't stay long and Ernie hurried me out of the house just as I was greeting his mother and father. He said that we had to get to the parlour and that we were already running late. They took me to a beauty parlour where Jimmy and some of the other contestants were to get ready. There was a general hurried flurry of activity and a number of contestants were already being made up, including among them Miss India, Miss Guam and Miss Aruba. When we came in I heard various remarks made to Ernie and Jimmy, such as "Ay, Miss Singapore (Ernie had previously participated and won a beauty contest as Miss Singapore) who is you're new friend?" "Aren't you going to show you're beauty tonight, Miss Singapore?" and "Won't you introduce me to you're friend." However, we didn't stay long at this parlour, as apparently the two *gays* who were supposed to make up Jimmy had already moved elsewhere.

We finally found the parlour we were looking for, although only Honey and not Arthur, the *gay* they were primarily looking for, was there. This was a much quieter parlour, and Jimmy was the only contestant being made up at the time. Jimmy kept complaining that he looked too much like a *lannang* or *incik* (Chinese) reminding Honey that he was representing Czechoslovakia not China. Jimmy and Ernie also kept telling Honey to be careful with the eyes and not to make them look so small and squinty. At one point, Honey clearly frustrated with their continual fretting and nagging said, "*bahala na kamu*" ("to hell with you!"), but Jimmy and Ernie coaxed her back, saying that they didn't know how to do the hair properly and that she ought to just fix the eyes a bit. Another concern of Jimmy's was that her nose should have a proper high bridge effect, which was created by pencilling eyeliner along the ridge of her nose. This reminded me of comments which I frequently heard that all Americans had beautiful faces, and that, "no matter how beautiful you are or what kind of clothes you wear, if you have a beautiful nose then you are beautiful, if not your not."

We left the parlour about 7 p.m. and went to pick up my wife Heidi. We drove out to Cawit a small predominately Muslim community about 13 km out from Zamboanga city proper, which took about 45 minutes over mainly unsurfaced roads. I was

beginning to wonder if we had missed the place when we rounded a corner and saw a small clearing to the side of the road which was rather dimly lit and stood opposite a mosque in what was obviously the local basketball and main community gathering area. As we approached the clearing I could see that there was a small wooden stage which included a somewhat precarious looking cat walk coming out in front. This was held together with odd bits of timber, packing crates and wooden Coke and Pepsi bottle containers (see Figures 2.4 - 2.11 for pictures of beauty contest).

At the back of the stage was a wall over which a cloth was draped and on to which the title *Miss Gay Super Model 91* and other decorations had been pinned. On either side of the stage were large speaker boxes from which mostly western pop music was playing - including Whitney Houston, Air Supply and Kenny G, amongst others. There was one incandescent light mounted to a pole on the stage and a small "spotlight" mounted on a Coca-cola container at the end of the catwalk.

There were a few people milling around, but it was apparent that although late, we were still one of the first groups of contestants present. Ernie inquired around as to where the contestants would be changing and after a small detour across the road into the cluster of houses built out over the water, we found the principle organizer of the show, who was also *gay*. He told Ernie that the house the contestants would be using was directly behind the stage.

By this time a crowd was beginning to gather, the music was playing even louder and the table for the judges was being set up. A small table to the side was used to display various red and white ribbons, trophies, presents and flowers. Ernie had evidently told the people we were coming and we were ushered to the front where the judges were supposed to sit. Much to our surprise we (Heidi and I) were then asked if one of us would judge the competition. We initially declined, explaining that we had only come to watch and enjoy and that we did not know how to judge. However, they insisted that we assist with the judging, and in the end, Heidi took the job, leaving me free to roam around backstage between events.

The judges were given folders which contained the list of contestants according to the country they represented. There were three columns indicating criteria on which judging was to be based and the percentage for each of the three criteria. The split was: poise and personality - 25%; facial beauty - 25%; and intelligence - 50%. The judges included besides Heidi, a local school teacher/ headmistress, two former male (not *gay/bantut*) fashion contestants and a female beauty contestant. The judges were also given biscuits and soft drinks.

Behind the stage was a house where the contestants were able to change for the various portions of the contest. There were a considerable number of men hanging around the house, trying to look in the windows and/or the doors when they were open, and as we pushed our way through them to get inside some of them would attempt to pinch or fondle Jimmy. Others would tease the *gays* as they came out saying (in English), "hey baby" etc. Inside the house everyone, with the exception of myself and maybe one or two others, were *gay/bantuts* including the contestants and their assistants. Most of the time there was a flurry of activity as they prepared for the next part of the contest, by putting on their costume, changing jewellery and other accessories or touching up their make up and hair. Jimmy was assisted by Ernie, Honey from the beauty parlour and the make up artist Arthur - who had now arrived. However, both Honey and Arthur also made the rounds helping other *gays* with their make up and hair do.

Whilst a few of the contestants used stuffed bras, none that I could ascertain had taken hormones or had silicon implants. Ernie explained that such practises were quite rare amongst *gays*, at least in the southern Philippines, although he wasn't sure about practices in Manila. Nevertheless, there was still some apparent pretence at modesty and a reticence to "expose their breasts", but much of this behaviour appeared to be for my benefit. Most of them wore very tight underwear as well as full length hose, and while I did not see Jimmy or anyone else do it, they told me that they had previously taped or tied their genitals between their thighs and then slipped hose on.

With everything now apparently ready and the contest organizers scurrying back and forth (agitated that the event, scheduled to start at 7:00 was only just getting underway an hour and a half later) the m.c. - a straight male - welcomed everyone to the *Miss Gay Super Model of the World*. The judges were acknowledged (including the special guest foreigner) and thanks expressed to the various local sponsors and the gay organization, "The Gay Foundation of Life Time Achievement", which apparently was responsible for organizing the event.

It is very difficult to give an adequate description of the scene which for me was at first so very strange and wonderfully exotic. Towards the front and pressing up against the judges were mainly young children and young men, whilst sitting directly in front of the stage to one side were two beautifully turned out gays - who it turned out were the previous year's queen and first runner up. To one side of the stage was another row of benches and chairs occupied by various sponsors - mainly local village business persons and members of local leaders families, such as the wife of the *barangay* captain, councillors, etc., while towards the periphery were older men and women from the surrounding community, including one man whom I was told was the local Imam, although I did not confirm this.

The contest began with each contestant in their "ethnic attire" or "national costume" called out on to the stage and presented as Miss Germany, Miss Canada, etc. to a theme song. (I cannot recall the exact music used at this contest nor did I write it down in my field notes at the time although in another contest it was an electric orchestrated version of the Star Trek sound track). Each contestant walked to the front, and as the theme song faded somewhat into the background said a few words into the microphone, usually in a set piece and repeatedly practised English speech. A typical example was Jimmy's: "Good evening ladies and gentlemen, honoured members of the board of judges, my name is Regine Valasquez and I am representing the beautiful country of Czechoslovakia. May I wish you a pleasant evening and I hope that you will enjoy my beauty." He concluded, with an added touch of *gay-bantut* flair, "Thank you and I love you all". Contestants would then, as gracefully as possible, walk around the stage out onto the makeshift cat walk and back to their

place in the line of contestants. As the stage was quite small and there were 17 contestants, there was considerable jostling between them whilst they attempted to keep the perfect smile and perfectly poised positioning of their legs and arms.

The emergence of the *gays* brought with it a mixture of cat calls such as "sexy" or "*maarte*" (an important word which for the moment might be translated as glamorous), genuine appreciation expressed by clapping and by comments to each other about the "talent" of the *gays* and laughter or mimicry of any stutters, stammers or long pauses in their speech. Whilst most of the dresses, like the stage performances themselves, were truly convincing, many of the costumes were not quite all together, and in several cases the dresses were so short that they left either the front or the rear portion of the models underwear exposed. In another case all the hose had gathered together at the ankles of the contestant, which brought on uproarious laughter from the audience. One contestant's performance ended disastrously when she tripped and fell out of her shoes, and she left the stage humiliated and did not return. Ernie stressed that this only happened to *gays* during their first performances, although this same mixture of appreciation and hilarity gave the whole proceedings a certain satirical feel.

My own response to when the *gays* emerged on stage was a surprised, but uncanny feeling. On the one hand most of the *gays* in the dimly lit stage really did look like glamour/beauty "queen" models. On the other hand, although I had watched Jimmy and the others being made up at the parlours and dressing backstage, I would always have a double take at seeing them suddenly appear as women. When I commented to Ernie that Jimmy did appear very beautiful, and that I was taken aback with wonder at the show, he was clearly delighted as he had been building the show up to me for several weeks, recounting his own past experiences in beauty contests. He proudly pointed out that unlike beauty contests among women, *gay* models did not have to rehearse as much as women, but naturally knew how to walk and present themselves (even though he had previously told me that a good performance required lots of practise).

'Ethnic'/'National' costumes were followed by cocktail dress, summer and sports wear - including high cut or French cut bathing suits and two piece bikinis. The last fashion portion was the evening dress during which, to the accompaniment of Whitney Houston, the m.c. introduced each contestant reading out from their registration form their "vital statistics", ambition in life, personal motto, and ideal man. The dresses and other costumes were very "modern", clearly out of the ordinary for most Filipino women, and this not so subtle contrast was drawn distinctly in the counterpoising of the award for the Best in Ethnic, Summer, Sports, Cocktail etc, with a special award, the Best in Simple Fashion, which was given to the chair of the board of judges, a local school teacher/headmistress. Many of the *gays*, I learned, designed and tailored their own dresses, whilst others borrowed or touched up dresses borrowed from female family members or close friends. Indeed, Jimmy had asked if Heidi had any "cocktail dresses" she might borrow, but discovered, much to her disappointment, that this was not part of Heidi's normal travel kit.

A large part of the contest was actually spent presenting ribbons and trophies and/or special product line packages, such as the case of the winner of the Miss Lux award, for the most radiant face, who received a special supply of soap. Each of the different categories also had a special presenter to give the award, usually *gays* or women, some being amongst the prominent persons in the community who contributed some of the prizes, others being former winners from previous years contests. In addition to the awards for the contestants there were also several awards for the audience which were given during intermission, including the Best in Simple Fashion noted above. They also repeatedly announced the various local sponsors of the program, again mainly prominent women, as well as the "Gay Foundation of Life Time Achievement, which gave a *Gay Life Time Achievement Award* to an older *gay/bantut* who was one of the main sponsors/organizers of the event.

Following the costumes and presentation of the minor awards, the judges choose ten candidates for the penultimate Question and Answer portion. This was to be the basis from which the five finalist would be selected, and who in turn were asked another

set of questions. The questions were mainly about politics, for instance, "If you were president Corazon Aquino would you let former first lady Imelda Marcos return to the Philippines or not?" "What would you do if you were Saddam Hussein and you had lost the war?" "What can the average Filipino do to help the economic crisis in the Philippines?" Others were tailored around contestants chosen career ambition, such as "Why do you want to be a nurse?", etc.

The questions had been prepared by a local headmistress, who in an aside to Heidi told her that it was quite comical to be asking questions to "uneducated" *bantut* beauticians. They were all in English, and more importantly the answers had to be in English. As with their introductory greetings, any pauses, any slight break in their composure, any botched remarks met with immense laughter, and as a friend later told me the question and answer portion was the part of the contest he as well as others most looked forward too. I would also note here, that although it did not figure significantly in this particular contest, in addition to questions surrounding politics and particular career choices, questions in *gay* contests will also often explicitly play on the *bantuts* gender and sexuality with questions such as, "What effect can *gays* have on family planning?" "What would you do if you found out your boyfriend was a *gay* like you?" "If you could be born again, would you choose to be a man or a woman?" "What is your ideal woman?".

Although the response to these later questions in particular often elicited the most laughter, a well answered question was met with as much if not more support than a beautiful dress. As it turned out in this particular contest, one of the crowd's favourite in terms of appearance - Miss India - who was awarded "darling of the crowd", had difficulty with English comprehension and had to have her question translated into Tagalog. Thus, while largely able to retain her poise and stage presence, her failure to understand or respond coherently in English resulted in her elimination from the final five, much to the crowd's disappointment.

By the time the final five had been selected and had answered the last set of questions, it was 3 a.m., and the audience somewhat impatiently, waited for the

judges to decide on the winner. Meanwhile, the former *Miss Gay Super Model 1990* was introduced and made her farewell walk onto the platform. This was accompanied by a taped "swan song" in which over a "minus-one" karaoke accompaniment to "Don't cry for me Argentina" she described how happy she had been to be *Miss Gay Super Model 1990*, how she had endeavoured to serve and uphold her title over the previous year and finally how in turning her crown over, she sent her love and appreciation to all those who had supported her.

Finally, the runners up and winners were announced, each announcement preceded by a taped fanfare and drum roll (which had to be rewound prior to each announcement). In the end Miss Philippines, was crowned Miss *Gay Super Model*, and somewhat anti-climatically (for the crowd at least) she was presented with the corona by the previous years winners and hugs and kisses were exchanged all round, with the contestants postures reminiscent of those in the Miss America contest.

That done, the beauty contest quickly wound down, the crowd dispersed and groups of both jubilant and disconsolate *gays*, contestants and their supporters, gathered their things, a half dozen jumping in with Ernie and his brother Jimmy into our van. The whole way home, as throughout the next week, whenever Ernie and Jimmy were together they discussed their disappointment that Jimmy did not place higher in the show (although he was runner up and winner in two subsequent shows) and the likelihood that Ms Egypt, one of the five finalists, bribed the judges.

2.3 Beauty and The Legacy of the American Mandate.

"Doris: 'Miss America Stands for the good part of today's youth--not the drug-taking element. She stands for the clean-cut, not the shaggy-haired, and she stands, above all, for intelligence and beauty. (From Frank Deford's *There She Is* 1971:10)

M.C.: Miss China, If you could choose between beauty and intelligence which would you choose.

Miss China: As for me, I would choose intelligence.

M.C.: Good choice, Miss China, Good choice, and your also very pretty, isn't that nice.

The *gay* beauty contest presents a veritable cornucopia of what might be seen as exotic camp, for it is as if the *gays* could not afford to leave anything out. It is a false exoticism, however, for not only are transvestite beauty pageants a growing phenomenon in Southeast Asia, but also transvestite performances are found in many other parts of the world in places as seemingly diverse as Brazil, India and North America (see for instance Serena Nanda's (1990) *Neither Man Nor Woman*, Esther Newton's (1979) *Mother Camp* and Livingstone's [1991] film *Paris is Burning* amongst others). Moreover, as these and other ethnographies have demonstrated (cf. Cornwall 1994), the exotic and the erotic are located in, and are shaped by, the historically specific mundanities of social life.

Rather obviously the forms and idioms of beauty circulated in *gay* beauty contests in the Southern Philippines are informed by a western produced image of glamour and beauty, whether they be the locally televised Miss Universe and Miss America pageants or Hollywood movies and television programs. As such *gay* beauty contests have a familiar resonance about them, from the music of Andrew Loyd Weber and Madonna, amongst others, to the "ethnic/national" costumes which faithfully reproduce familiar stereotypes. Island countries are equated with flowery skirts, sarongs and swimsuits and African countries with appropriately "primitive" attire, including charcoal darkened skin and leopard spotted tights.

Running parallel to and informing this global cosmopolitanism as much as the American media's version of it, however, is the Manila based Filipino media's

production of superstars (*artista*) such as Janice de Belen, Regine Valasquez and Sharon Cuneta. It is the names of these *artista* which are appropriated by *gays* in the beauty contests and who even more so than the western media productions are what people watch on television, in the video houses and in the cinema. As Cannel (1991: 342) notes, all of these presents to a certain extent an already domesticated west, a global cosmopolitanism situated and transformed by local sensibilities.

However, this also highlights the extent to which the particular constitution of the imagined global other is informed and structured not just by a diffuse world of goods and information but by the specific political articulations and in this case the particular institutions, the media (no less than the Philippine state), established during and after the American colonial regime in the early part of this century. It is important to note, for instance, within the context of Muslim communities in the Southern Philippines that whilst Hollywood may have been domesticated by the local media, it is still largely within the terms of a majority Christian culture which is certainly seen as less distinctive and often times threatening to the understanding and practise of Muslim culture. My primary concern here, however, is with looking at some of the other political and institutional articulations whose roots can be traced back to the earliest days of the American and American-Filipino administration of Sulu, and which continue to inform the ongoing discourse of beauty in the local arena.

When the Americans began their occupation of Sulu in 1898, although greatly diminished and ostensibly acknowledging the Spanish governor-general, the traditional Sulu polity still retained some degree of political autonomy. Moreover, unlike many other parts of the Philippines, the Americans began their administration of Sulu with a largely *laissez-faire* attitude. Within a few short years, however, the policy of non-interference gave way to a policy of direct rule. This change was not brought about by economic interest, but rather by the challenge Sulu society and culture- the "*Moro* problem"- posed to the American Mandate, which had as its stated goal the development of an "Individual and Democratic society".

Coinciding with the measures taken to forcibly dissolve and restructure the traditional "feudal" Sulu polity and police a so called *pax americana* (and see also Chapter 4 below), a "policy of attraction" based on President McKinnley's notion of benevolent assimilation was implemented in Sulu. As throughout the Philippines, the principle institution through which this was to be accomplished was education. In 1906, school enrolment in Sulu was listed as 397 (Gowing 1983: 136), whilst in 1921-22 there were 68 primary schools, 4 intermediate and 4 secondary schools with a total annual enrolment of 9738 (6885 boys and 2853 girls) (Orosa 1931:124-25). Such seeming advances (which masked the very high absentee rate), prompted the first Filipino governor, Acting Governor Guingona to write,

If the present progress of public instruction continues without interruption for 10 years more, we shall then have placed on a more solid base the foundation of culture, prosperity, and the national consolidation of our country with respect to these islands of Mindanao-Sulu heretofore considered as the most problematical, and the so-called "*Moro Problem*" will then have been solved (Gowing 1983: 306)

Of particular interest here, moreover, are the various accounts of educational institutions in which competitive sporting and other performative events are seen as being indicative of a change in the "*Moro character*" from feudalism to democracy. Sixta Orosa's (1931) *The Sulu Archipelago and its People* is a primary example in this regards. Orosa - a Filipino doctor and public health officer in Jolo during this period - was concerned to demonstrate the progress that was being made in Sulu as a result of the policy of attraction, and spends much time discussing education, suggests the coming of baseball would replace cockfighting, and notes that American dances such as the foxtrot, had begun to be introduced and taken up by the Sultan and his family, amongst others, as part of religious festivals.

Accompanying his narrative account are numerous plates, which include several pictures of school children in sports, leisure activities and in parades. Another of the pictures is of a carnival queen, named as Princess Indataas (Figure 2.12). Significantly Princess Indataas was the daughter of a local leader who had previously led part of the continuing resistance against the American policy of disarmament,

following a major battle at Bud Bagsak in Jolo. The caption indicates she was "rescued from Bud (Mt.) Bagsak" and was now a school teacher, her father having previously allowed her to be enrolled in the Jolo girls dormitory established in 1916 (see also Gowing 1983: 306).

These descriptions of course say much more about the expectations and understandings of the author, than they do about the actual social situation. Nonetheless, they provide important historical insights into some of the more important aspects of the beauty contests. Indeed, Richard Wilk's (1995:11 *passim*) recent comparison of sporting competitions and beauty contests resonate both with the snippets and snapshots of colonial observation and in the close and ongoing association between education, beauty contests and the myriad competitive and performative programs within school curriculums. This is particularly true of his illustration of the Double-Dutch League Jump Rope Championships with its educative emphasis on discipline, self-development and "developing self-respect".

Schools of all levels are continuously producing talent shows, fashion and cultural presentations and these are often part of larger events, such as the annual provincial all schools meet which includes sporting events and other performative competitions. Such events, moreover, are one of the primary financial considerations for families when contemplating their childrens continuing education beyond elementary grades. Families are confronted with at least two (and sometimes more) events for each school age child, for which they must purchase new items of clothing such as shirts, pants or shoes as well as costume accessories. These items can amount to several hundred pesos, all of which is in addition to the required school uniform. These events, moreover, have acquired the status of an "occasion", and are one of the major themes of snapshots displayed in home interiors accompanying various awards and diplomas from school.

Part of my contribution to the household in which I stayed, for example, included the purchase of a shirt and a hat - a *remembrance* - for Jun-Jun, the eldest school age son, which was used in a talent presentation being organized by his high school

teacher. It so happened that his teacher was Jessica, Miss *Gay* International, Jolo 1990. Nor was this strictly coincidental, for *gays*, especially as beauticians, but also as teachers or in some capacity connected with educational institutions, now play a leading role in organizing not just their own beauty contests, but also in other beauty contests (including reportedly parodies of *gay* contests) talent shows and other performative events both within and outside of the schools and colleges. One *gay* beautician and parlour owner even sponsors her own competitive basketball team.

Many of the teachers and school administrators I talked to said that because of the *gays'* talent and "predilection" for such things, they were often put in charge of organizing such affairs within the schools. Those *gays* still in school as well as those relating stories of their school days suggest, moreover, that teachers were sometimes amongst the most encouraging of their behaviour precisely because of their artistic endeavours. Indeed, the high school/college time was seen by most *gays* as being an extremely significant time, when their "gayness" came out- "*gimuwa in pagkagay ku*", and is associated by most as a period of heightened cross dressing activity as well as participation in *gay* "shows".

The *Mutya ng Bayan* (Pearl of the Land), Jolo 1991, for instance, a woman's beauty contest, held at the prestigious Notre Dame de Jolo College auditorium, was organized almost exclusively by the *gay* community, as was the prior years *Miss Hari Raya*. Most of the *gay* parlour owners sponsored one or more of the contestants, and as in past shows, display the pictures of the women contestants whom they have sponsored, especially finalist and winners, in their parlours. *Gays* moreover, working in conjunction with the "jack and jill" radio music club - whose main organizers are also *gays* - canvassed other wealthy sponsors, selecting judges, arranged for the facilities, orchestrated the stage performance, and tutored the women in their talent presentations. Similarly, the Mr and Miss JS (Junior-Senior) Notre Dame de Jolo College- a beauty, talent and fashion show which lasted over several days (followed by its re-broadcast over the single local television station controlled by the OMI, Oblates of Mary Immaculate) was also to a large extent organized and orchestrated both by *gays* within the college and in the wider community.

Why it should be *gays* who have become central figures in these events is what I shall discuss at length in the remainder of this thesis. What I wish to highlight here is the extent to which the discourse of education is central to the practise of beauty. Like the names appropriated from movie stars and artista, *gay* beauty contestants appropriate educational qualifications and professional ideals, which are included in their "biodata" sheets under "education" or "life's ambition". These are repeated at least twice throughout the contest; voiced over the music during introductions and formal gown presentations. Whilst "being a world rank model" or something similar often occurs as a frequent "ambition", the educated professional frequently shows up as well:

Miss India (or China, Philippines, etc.) is currently undertaking a Bachelors of Science in education (or nursing, medicine, law, communications, etc.). Her ambition in life is to be a teacher- (or nurse, or doctor, or lawyer.)

In most beauty contests it is usual for the highest section of marks to be given for intelligence, or some other related category, as in the contest described previously in which 50% of the points were to be awarded for intelligence, 25% for facial beauty and 25% for poise. Moreover, the question and answer portion is often seen by the contestants - as by the judges and audience as being the most critical. Proficiency in English is taken as a measure of education and intelligence, and in the majority of the contests, questions for the "interview portion" are usually set and read in english with translation into either Tagalog or Tausug or any other dialect disallowed. The questions themselves as I noted would focus either on sexuality and gender, on politics or closely aligned themes such as civic responsibility, education and professional occupations. Typical exchanges from the contests include:

Q. If you were President Cory Aquino, would you allow Imelda Marcos to return to the Philippines?

A. If I am President Aquino, I am telling Imelda Marcos that she cannot return to the Philippines because she is stealing money from the Filipino people.

Q. What will you do if you win the contest?

A. I will tell the youth about peace, educating the youth and clean elections.

Q. Why do you want to be a nurse?

A. I want to be a nurse so I can help my fellow man.

Q. Why do you want to be in media and communications.

A. So I can promote the cause of democracy and help to the development of the country.

The questions were either set by *gay* organizers of the contests or alternately in conjunction with, or solely by, one or more of the board of judges. What is interesting here is the relation between, on the one hand, the explicit themes of the questions and, on the other hand, the status of judges and contest sponsors. Included amongst the latter are those persons who are seen as best embodying the ideals of the 'educated' or at the very least 'professional' citizen. Moreover, like the biodata of the various contestants, the names of the sponsors and judges and their professional associations will often be repeatedly read out throughout a performance.

It is important to note here the prominent role that the Jaycees (JCC) - Junior Chamber of Commerce- and other civic organizations such as the "Pink Ladies Association" not to mention the "Sulu Sisters Club" (the local *gay* association) have played in sponsoring *gay* and other beauty contests. As Arce (1983:47) noted in his study of political leadership within Jolo, the Jaycees were and by all accounts continue to be one of the most active voluntary civil organizations in Jolo for the politically prominent, and include amongst their members several *gays* in the community. The stated aims of these various organizations as listed in the most recent Jolo Municipal Socio-Economic Profile (1987: 116-123) include, "to participate in government projects that aims towards development"; "to help and promote cleanliness drive in the town of Jolo"; "leadership development" or "to build useful citizens", Their activities range from being the "Voice of Democracy" (Jolo Jaycees) to organizing the Miss *Gay* World 1987, and Search for Miss Hari Raya '88 .

Looked at from this perspective beauty contests are filled with instances of stylistic and verbal discourse which are clearly embedded in colonial ministrations. Beauty is about education and the mastery of the English language. Beauty is about good

citizenry and professional orientation. Beauty is about sportsmanship with winners democratically decided on the basis of clear criteria. The point is that the images of beauty purveyed in the beauty contest are rooted in and articulate a particular conceptual order of the world. Moreover, both the images of glamour and the images of education, grow out and are part of the same conceptual order. Thus, it is neither surprising nor co-incidental that "beauty" is associated with those very institutions which were seen as necessary for the implementation of the American Mandate or that local persons perceptively see these institutions, educational institutions in particular, as the locus of and for the *ilmu' Milikan*, that is the knowledge-power or potency of the American.

All of this might be seen as an indication of the relative success of the American mandate. However, as is evidenced in the myriad images and discourses which together make up the bricolage of the beauty contests, the *ilmu' Milikan* is no longer strictly speaking about America or the Americans. Rather as I will show, it has become, along with the sometimes conflicting notion of the *ilmu' Islam* (the knowledge-power of Islam), one of the primary idioms through which a global world order is thought and local identity constructed. At the same time, the colonial legacy, and in particular the incorporation of Sulu within the Philippine State, continues to inform the historical working out and further crystallization of this identity. Indeed, the valorization *gay/bantut* engenderment and their emergence as mediatory figures is critically tied to a period of state and separatist violence in the mid to late 1970's.

As I suggest in the following chapters, however, the appropriation of things American within, amongst others, the idiom of *ilmu'*, also signals that one is in the presence of something which a much longer history. Specifically, it signals a local theory of knowledge-power or spiritual potency. This provides the basis not only for understanding the concern with beauty, *istyle* (style) and education, but also provides a basis for a deeper understanding of the *gay/bantut* as mediatory figures in its appropriation.

1. An interesting intra-ethnic dimension of this is that most of the *bantut* dancers which I saw, and were told about, were actually Sama rather than Tausug. In fact, with the exception of one of my older gay friends/informants who during the 1970's she performed as part of cultural troupe in various parts of the country including Manila, none of the mainly Tausug *gay/bantut* in the town of Jolo performed as traditional dancers, although I am not sure to what extent this observation hold good outside of the town of Jolo. Nevertheless this would seem to fit with other local notions, in Jolo particularly, related to intra-Muslim ethnicity, in which the Sama are seen as being more 'traditional' and the Tausug more 'progressive'.

2. There are, however, indirect suggestions particularly with regard to their being ritual specialist. One of these which at some point would clearly be important to pursue, is a common statement especially amongst the Sama, that Tabauwan (an island near Siasi, South of Jolo) is home to many *bantut*. In addition to commonly being regarded as a haven for *bantuts* it is also an ancestral island for many Central Sama groups, many of whom maintain a separate ancestral house- *luma' umbo'*- which they return to on various occasions, although no explicit link was ever drawn between the two. Moreover, up until recently, the *bantut* did appear to undergo instruction in Qur'anic reading to become *pakil*, a minor religious cum ritual official which in the case of women usually entails reciting the koran, *magpangaji'*, during death rituals, and according to one older *gay* informant who himself had begun such instruction, *bantut pakil*, would perform these recitations alongside other women *pakil*. This corresponds to the observations of a recently retired American missionary who also reported seeing Tausug *bantut* serving as a one who *magpangaji'* (Rev. James Johnson, personal communication). Similarly Moore (1980:319) in her discussion of Tausug *bantuts* in Zamboanga notes that many of the male religious adepts she knew had assumed *bantut* status.

Having said this, only a few of the Tausug and Sama *gays* I knew in Jolo and Zamboanga, exhibited this same religious inclination which Moore attributes to the *bantut*. One was a beautician in a beauty parlour in Jolo who was, as far as I could determine, devout in prayers and attendance at the mosque, whilst another was a beautician and parlour owner, who had previously undertaken ritual and religious instruction from a *guru* (religious teacher) to acquire *ilmu'* (esoteric knowledge-power). Most *gays* neither had an interest in, nor were they associated with, religion or specific ritual practises. I would also note that one young Sama who was at one time considered to be a *bantut-bantut*, told me that while he had previously been like a *bantut*, because he had followed in his fathers steps inheriting their particular *ntan* (hold of ancestral power) he could no longer be a *bantut* lest the ancestors curse him: the reason being that the homosexual practises, with which the *bantut* are associated, are considered to be a heinous sin in local Islamic theology (cf. Chapter 5 below).



Figures 2.1 and 2.2: Two Sama *bantut* dancers performing.





Figure 2.3 *Bantut* dancer (Tausug?) performing at a wedding in the interior of Jolo Island.



Figures 2.4 and 2.5 The board of judges (above) at the *Miss Gay Super Model*, including my wife, and Ms. Canada (below) in 'national' attire emerging at the start of the beauty contest.





Figure 2.6 and 2.7 Contestants (above) parading in 'cocktail' gown, and (below) receiving special awards.



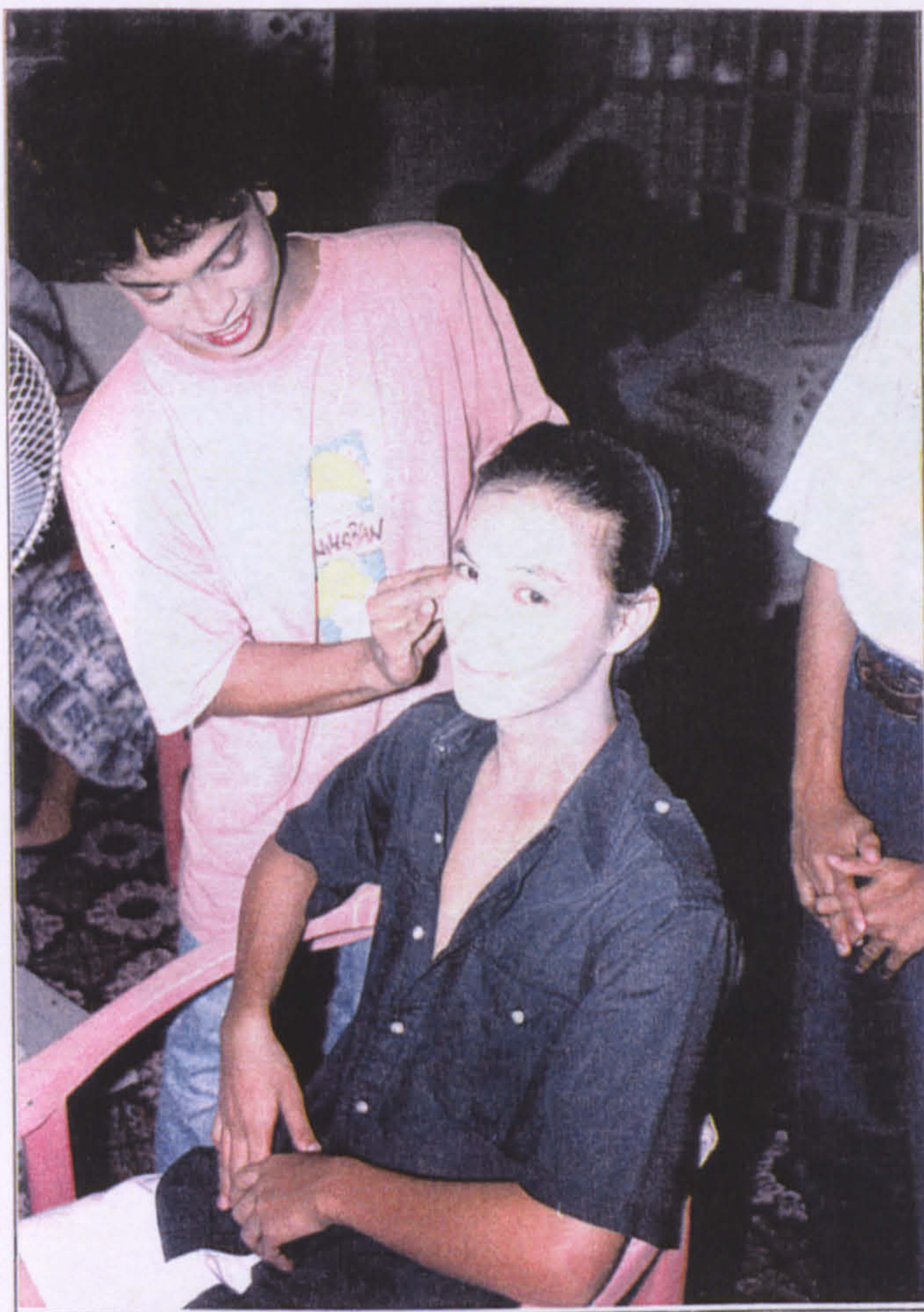


Figure 2.8 and 2.9:
Ms. Czechoslovakia
(above) being made
up by Honey and
(below) Ms. Czech-
oslovakia in
'evening gown'.

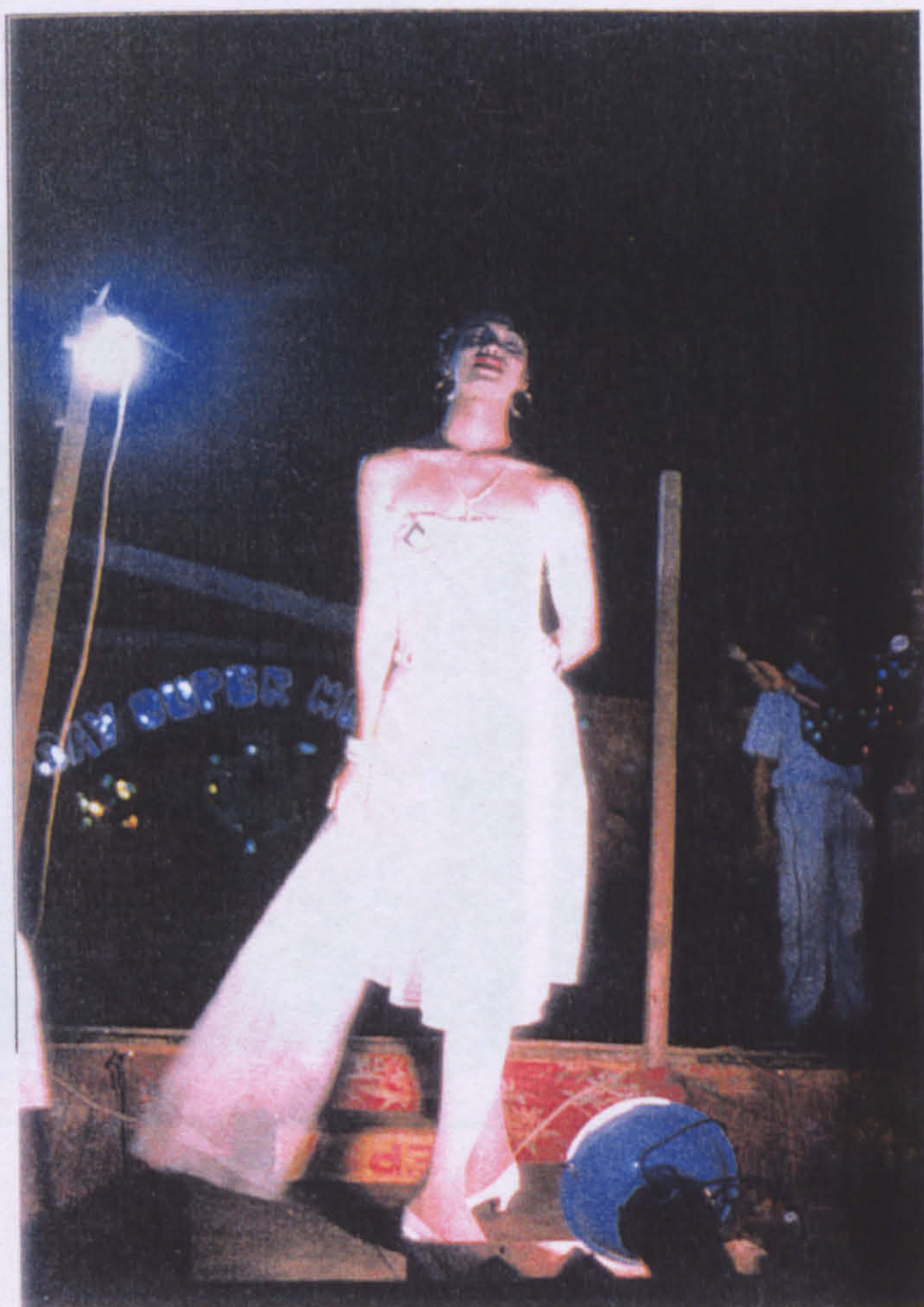




Figure 2.10 and 2.11: The previous year's winner and first runner up of the *Ms. Gay Supermodel* (of the world) (above) and (below) with the five finalist for the 1991 contest.



Figure 2.12 Princess *Indataas*, a carnival queen from the early part of this century in Jolo (reproduced from Orosa 1923:107)



Indataas, queen of a recent carnival at Jolo. While a little girl, she was carried away from Bagsak by Sulus fleeing after the battle. She is now a teacher in the public schools.

Chapter 3. Potency, Gifting Transactions and Hierarchy in Sulu.

3.1 Introduction: *Ilmu*' and Islam in the Southern Philippines.

In this chapter I outline two central cultural themes in Sulu, relating them to discussions in the wider regional and comparative ethnographic literature. The first is *ilmu*', which is both an idiom for, and means of acquiring knowledge-power or spiritual potency. The second is *remembrancing*, which refers to the gifting transactions through which human being as a meaningful social subject is seen to be constituted. Together, as I outline in the final part of this chapter, they form two of the primary axis within and along which status-hierarchy is locally conceptualized and played out.

When a child is born in Sulu, the placenta, which is considered to be the elder sibling of the infant, is placed in a coconut shell and either planted in the ground or hung in a nearby tree. Included with the placenta is a piece of paper with a portion of the Qur'an written in Arabic and a scrap of an English language newspaper. This is done, it is said, so that the child will grow up to possess both the *ilmu*' *Islam* (the knowledge-power of Islam, associated with religious learning and ritual) and the *ilmu*' *Milikan* (the knowledge-power of the American, associated with secular education) both of which are spoken of as part of the *pusaka*', inheritances, which parents give their children.

The word *ilmu*' (or one of its cognates), from the Arabic *ilm*' meaning knowledge or science, is used throughout many parts of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Muslim Southern Philippines, and has been variously translated as "magic" or "esoteric knowledge" (Geertz 1960:88; Endicott 1970:14; Keeler 1987:81). In Sulu there are several competing understandings of *ilmu*'. Some persons who attempted to define for me the meaning of the term *ilmu*' would simply translate it into the English word "power", describing the kinds of things or objects they possessed which gave them power. This included various amulets (*habai*, cf. Figures 3.1 & 3.2) or efficacious

utterances (*bassahun*).¹ The referential meaning of these utterances appear to be insignificant. Like amulets, it is the physical or object-like quality of the words, the sound and written forms, and not their meaning which is important (Horvatic 1994:815). The object-like quality of *bassahun* (a mixture of Arabic, Malay and Tausug words which are chanted or uttered) is clearly referenced in the way that persons often described the use of *bassahun* as a process of being clothed in or putting on *ilmu*'. An example of this is the following story related to me by a woman about the death of her brother. Her uncle and brother were going from one island to another and had been warned in advance that they would probably encounter some hostile men. Before they left on their trip they prepared in the following manner:

My uncle's *ilmu*' was very strong. Before they left they ritually bathed and then my uncle told my brother that he would use his *ilmu*' to make them invulnerable to the bullets. So then they got dressed, and in the same manner that they put on their clothes they put on the *ilmu*' so that they were completely covered. Only my uncle told my brother that when they were attacked that he should remain completely quiet, because if he said anything then the *ilmu*' would not be effective. If one made a sound, then the bullet would also sound (to sound here implying hit its mark), but if no sound was made, then the bullets would not sound either.

So they took off on their trip and were midway through the channel, when another boat came alongside them. My uncle told my brother and everyone else in the boat, "do not make any noise". Then the people in the other boat began firing, and they kept firing for a long time so that the boat was riddled with bullets...Finally, my brother could not stand it and let out a yell. When he did the bullet sounded and it hit my brother in the chest and he was killed...My uncle was the only survivor on the boat.

Another example in which a direct correlation was drawn between dressing and *ilmu*' was a wooden stick figure (Sinama, *pogot*) used for divination and fortune telling (Figure 3.3 & 3.4). In order to prepare the figure, a *panday* (a female ritual specialist), who claimed to be the only person who possessed such *ilmu*', dressed the wooden skeleton in a *sablay* and *habul* (traditional blouse and sarong). She then placed incense on a censer whilst reciting her *bassahun*. The *panday* and any person who wished to inquire of the *pogot* would take hold of it by the arms and then relate their query to the *panday*, who in turn put the questions to the *pogot* who was

addressed as *Tuan Putli'* (princess). The *pogot*, which was now said to be alive, responded to the question by shaking vigorously and tapping one or the other arms on the floor to indicate a positive or negative response.

What these examples demonstrate is not only the object or thing-like quality of *ilmu'*, but also the fact that the body is an indexical sign of, and an important locus for, the incorporation and appropriation of *ilmu'*, which in Tambiah's (1984) terms might be considered sedimentations of power. It is useful to consider the wider comparative context within which such an understanding of *ilmu'* fits. Whilst *ilmu'* is a derivative of an Arabic word and whilst the use of amulets and esoteric knowledge is common to many Islamic societies (cf. Mommersteeg 1990; El-Tom 1985), it is clear that *ilmu'* articulates with a particular Southeast Asian sensibility surrounding spiritual potency, which is variously referenced as *kebatinan* or *kasekten* (Keeler 1987), *nyawa* or *semangat* (or one of its cognates) (Waterson 1992:115-117). Errington (1989) writing within the context of Luwu, Sulawesi, defines *sumange'* as "spiritual potency" or "cosmic energy", whilst Endicott (1970:50) defines *sumangat*, as a "generalized vital principle which is present in varying degrees in the universe."

Potency itself is imperceptible, but rather presents itself in the world through a system of indexical signs: indexical used here in Peirce's (1940) sense of signs that are "direct expressions of their referent, intrinsic to it, in the way smoke is a sign of fire, steam a sign of water, dark clouds a sign of rain (Errington 1989:124)." In persons it is indexed in the body or the influence one has over other persons.

Changes in the concentration of *semangat* will lead to changes in the condition of the body. The mental connection of the observer is probably made the other way around: the condition of the body is taken as the index of the concentration of *semangat* (Endicott 1970:87).

Thus, persons are concerned with obtaining potency or at the very least with guarding against its dissipation, and much of the ascetic practises and ritual performances in Southeast Asia are directed either towards concentrating potency or guarding against its dispersal. This is clear in the local term *ilmu'an*, which references persons who

are filled up with *ilmu'* and thus in a state of continuing efficaciousness. That is to say, one may have an amulet or possess some *bassahun* but if the amulet is not worn or the *bassahun* not uttered, then it cannot help or protect a person. Those that are *ilmu'an*, however, are said to be able to walk unnoticed in the midst of enemies and remain impenetrable without the use of amulets or *bassahun*. I often heard the term *ilmu'an* used in reference to older men, particularly recognized *guru's* (religious teachers), who were described as still being physically fit and virile, that is, those who are still able to stand (*nakatindug pa*), finger gestures made silently at me lest I should not catch the intended double meaning. In fact, *ilmu'* understood in this way is not just associated with an older generation, but identified as the *ilmu' sin kamaasan*, the knowledge-power of the forbears, the latter of whom are spoken of as having been *ilmu'an* and *mabarakat*, that is efficacious or possessing spiritual power or blessing.

Counterpoised to *ilmu'* associated with the forbears and understood simply in terms of power or spiritual potency, however, is an understanding of *ilmu'* primarily as religious "knowledge", which is the way that the term *ilmu'* was translated into English for me by the *ustadz*, Islamic professors, several of whom had studied at Islamic universities abroad. In particular, as articulated by the *ustadz* (professors), *ilmu'* is understood to mean the knowledge of the Qur'an which is seen as a necessary second term together with *iman* (faith) in defining the true Muslim believer. Emphasis is placed by them not just on being able to read or recite the Qur'an but on understanding its content. Thus, the *ilmu'* of the *kamaasan* (forbears), which does not rely on a understanding of the written word, is seen by the *ustadz* to have led to the introduction or incorporation of many un-Islamic, or contra-Qur'anic elements in local "folk" Islam.

These sometimes competing definitions of *ilmu'* are a central facet of the current negotiation of Islam and closely parallels Horvatic's (1994) observations and interpretations of a similar situation in Simunul, an island further south in the province of Tawi-Tawi, where the orthodox (that is the traditionalists who are comparable to the followers of the *kamaasan* (forbears) in Jolo) stand in opposition

to the *amhadi* (islamist reformers, which in Jolo is usually associated with the *ustadz* (Islamic professors)).² The central issue as Horvatich draws it is different ways of knowing Islam, a distinction drawn between *ilmu'* understood as a concrete thing or quality ("spiritual power" in Anderson's [1972] terms), which is limited and can be possessed as opposed to *ilmu'* understood as an abstract rational system of knowledge which is unlimited and outside the knower. In Jolo, those persons who say they follow the ways of the *kamaasan* (the ancestors or forbears) are often (although not exclusively) the uneducated and relatively poor, while those who follow the *ustadz* (Islamic professors) tend to identify themselves as educated or educated-professionals and are often more affluent. As such, the religious understandings represented by the *ustadz*, are an important form of cultural capital and symbolic distinction.³

However, there are two important points to be made here. On the one hand, it should be noted that the *ilmu' sin kamaasan* (the *ilmu'* of the forbears) presupposes a knowledge of Islam, a point continually reiterated to me by various *guru's* (teachers) who identified themselves as following the ways of the ancestors. During the initial stages of my relationship with one particular *mulkali'* (literally an uneducated or illiterate *guru*), before I even had the chance to ask him anything, he began with a speech about the nature of true Islam, rattling off in rapid succession the five pillars of Islamic faith, and the basic tenets of belief (*Manga Rukun Iman*). Thus, the *ilmu' sin kamaasan* is seen by its adherents as falling within the scope of the *ilmu' Islam*.

On the other hand, even amongst the educated elite who follow the *ustadz*, there is a consensus that as many people have told me, "*maas mabarakat in ilmu' sin manga kamaasan dayn sin ilmu' sin manga ustadz*" - "the *ilmu'* of the elders possessed greater spiritual blessing or power than the *ilmu'* of the religious teachers/scholars today". This suggests that whilst what is verbally articulated by the growing educated-professional class is that *ilmu'* is simply a rational system of knowledge, there is a continuing sensibility which regards *ilmu'* as signalling a definite quality of spiritual potency. In fact, many educated followers of Islamist teaching maintain a strong belief in the efficacious power of amulets and ritual utterances.

Thus, rather than argue that these two understandings of *ilmu*' represent two necessarily opposed orders of relations (*ilmu*' as power, as opposed to *ilmu*' as knowledge) I would suggest that the distinction lies more in the respective orientation towards what might be called the texture and textuality of religious understanding. That is to say, in the case of *ilmu*' associated with the ancestors or forebears, the emphasis is more on the inherent *mana*-like spiritual quality or texture of the religious object, whereas in the case of persons who identify with the *ustadz*, whilst *ilmu*' retains many of its *mana*-like associations and sensibilities, understanding has, **in addition**, become a question of exegesis, of being able to articulate, as well as to situate oneself more abstractly in relation to, a variety of different textual possibilities.⁴

The point I wish to make here is that whilst Islam is not a monolithic ideology in Sulu and whilst the precise definition of *ilmu*' may increasingly be in dispute, these different orientations towards *ilmu*' cannot be neatly divided into separate traditions such as between the more educated urban *santri* and uneducated peasant *abangan* traditions outlined by Geertz (1960) in *The Religion of Java*. Moreover, as I argue in the thesis, the internal division between these competing understandings of Islam has at times been subsumed, even as they have been informed, by the contrasting and sometimes conflicting understandings, and claims to possession, of the *ilmu*' *Islam* (the knowledge-power of Islam) and the *ilmu*' *milikan* (the knowledge-power of America): the key idioms within, through and sometimes, in the latter case, against which local Muslim or Moro identity has been constructed and negotiated in the last century.

3.2 *Remembrancing*: gifting transactions and the constitution of the social identity.

Equal in importance to *ilmu*' as a central cultural idiom through which questions of spiritual power or potency are addressed, is the notion of *remembrances* or gifting relations through which social identity (one's place in social memory) is seen to be

constituted.⁵ The two are not unrelated. *Ilmu*', which is often regarded as a highly secretive and very personal possession, may be obtained in several different ways. In many instances, *ilmu*' is part of the *pusaka*' or inherited items that are passed on to both men and women by parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts or elder brothers and sisters. Such knowledge is not seen as being suitably given to someone who is not of one's close family. I have also heard of *bassahun* being given directly by God, in which case the *ilmu*' most often appears to be acquired in a dream, and several local *panday* (female ritual specialists) told me that all their *ilmu*' came directly from God. *Ilmu*' is also acquired by living with and studying with a *guru* or teacher (*magpangguru*), although in the communities where I was staying and did research, no one that I knew was currently doing this and it does not seem to be such a prevalent practise at present. Indeed, in most cases, one seems to acquire specific *ilmu*' from a *guru*, *imam* or *panday* (various religious and ritual specialist) in exchange for some kind of gift.

That there must be some gift was highlighted by a *panday* (ritual specialist/midwife) who had allowed me to tape some of her *bassahun* (efficacious utterances), but insisted that even if it was a small amount that I should give some *sarraka* (alms) to her. Explaining she told me a story about a man who during his life "fed off of [other persons] *ilmu*'" but who after death was fed off of by other people. That is, during life he had acquired *ilmu*' from many different persons but had never given *sarraka* (alms gifts) and had never performed *bakti* (devoted service). In the afterlife, however, those same persons returned to feed off of him. Thus, as she said, "*amu in adat sin ilmu', subay magbakti', subay magsarraka*" - "This is the way it is with *ilmu*', one must perform *bakti*, *sarraka* must be given". The point is (and most persons agreed with the sensibility expressed by this particular *panday* about *ilmu*') that to acquire *ilmu*' or to possess potency outside of gifting relationships is, as I elaborate below, not simply considered to be anti-social, but is considered to be other than human.⁶

Although *sarraka* (from the Arabic *saddaka*, charitable alms, often translated as a gift freely or generously given [*ihilas tuud*]) is the term most often used in reference to

gifts given in exchange for *ilmu*', indicating the sacrificial and religious nature of the gifting transaction, *sarraka* also articulates with *remembrances*, a much wider and more culturally specific set of exchange forms. *Remembrances* is how most persons translated the Tausug (T) *panumtuman* and Sinama (S) *pangntoman* and frequently the English term *remembrance* was used interchangeably in speaking about them. As a friend explained *panumtuman* to me, if for instance he invited me in to his house and served me coffee, that is *panumtuman* - a *remembrance*. As he went on to clarify, it would be a situation in which as he put it, "*awn panumtuman mu, awn panumtuman ku*"- you have a *remembrance*, and I have a *remembrance*. *Panumtuman* or the *remembrance*, then, is that which is given, that which remains with the giver and that which remains with the recipient. The important point is that a gift of *remembrance*, leaves both the giver and the recipient with a *remembrance* or a shared memory.

Remembrances may be gifts of help either in the form of labour, *sangsa*', or material assistance, *tulung*, or they may just be a shared meal, cigarettes or coffee. *Remembrances* may also be material objects. Such objects are also known as *pangita'an* /*pangnda'an*, which, derived from the respective roots to look/to see, are often used interchangeably with the word for *remembrances* and might best be translated as visible items of *remembrance*, although persons sometimes translated it as souvenirs, mementos, memorabilia.

Like the Maussian gift, a *remembrance* implicitly requires reciprocation or *tungbas/tumbas*- which might be translated as a return, also reward, or recompense. However, it is important to understand precisely what is intended. The reciprocal or *balik-balik*- back and forth- nature of *remembrances* is always defined in opposition to the kind of balanced and enumerated material equivalence explicit in the ideology of *utang*, debts (Hollensteiner 1972:66). As the local dictum has it, *In utang bayaran, in panumtuman di' kagadjian, di' kagantian sin* - debts are paid, *remembrances* cannot be waged, they cannot be exchanged or replaced by money. The point is that a return on a *remembrance* is seen as an additional *remembrance*. *Panumtuman* (*remembrancing*) is fundamentally not about material exchange but the reciprocal enactment and creation of a particular kind of social memory or as I shall

argue a social self or identity.

The construct *nagtuntum*- from the same root as *panumtuman* (*remembrances*)- is a verb which is not simply remembering, but an active longing for someone which if unabated in some cases is said not just to bring the longing person into a state of ill health but potentially will render the person longed for weak or even sick. Thus, for instance, a woman related to me how she once had a dream about her brother who was living and working in Sabah, Malaysia. The significance of the dream did not lie in the specific content of the dream, but simply in the fact that his appearance indicated his sorrow and longing. The next day she went to town and bought a new shirt and gave it away as a *remembrance* in the form of charitable alms (*sarraka*), to a young man whose age was similar to that of her brother. This she said was a *remembrance* for her brother, and was necessary both in order to alleviate his longing and to ensure that she would not become ill through the influence of his longing.

Similarly it is often said of a dead relative, especially of siblings, parents or grandparents, that if they are not remembered that they may cause a person to become ill. Thus, if one dreams of a deceased person, it is necessary to hold a *duwa'a aruwa*- a special *remembrance* prayer, and give alms (*sarraka*) on behalf of the deceased as a *remembrance* so as to prevent a member of the household from becoming ill through the influence of the deceased person's longing.

The terms which in Sinama denote the situation of being rendered ill through another's longing, are *sinumangat* and *sinumangat illum*. Derivatives of the root *sumangat*, they are clearly cognate with the Malay *semangat* and Buginese *sumange'* in signalling the individuals life force, although in the first instance they refer to (are indexed in) a persons sense of well being. Although there is no one particular word in Tausug used with reference to this, the sensibility of longing and *remembrances* are the same, and the root *sumangat* may be considered largely synonymous with the Tausug *nyawalihan*. These terms in turn stand in close relation to other important shared Tausug and Sama concepts of *umagad* (shadow/courage) and *nyawa* (life breath; also signals more general life force in the world). Together these signal key

aspects of the non-material or soul stuff of persons (*ginhawa*).

That *remembrancing* is variously linked with an inner self or spiritual potency suggests that what I have, following local persons, translated "*remembrances*" must be differentiated from our more usual understanding of *remembrance* as recollection or memorial, since what is signalled is an active process in which the vital energy or life force of persons are put into play. Indeed, as in Mauss' (1954) classic formulation, "to give a gift is to give a part of oneself" (see Waterson 1992:116 for comparative examples from island Southeast Asia) More to the point what is implied by *remembrances* (considered as "that which is given, that which remains with the giver and that which remains with the recipient") and what is more directly referenced by the concept of *sinumangat llum* (to be rendered ill or out of sorts by the influence of another persons longing) is, as it were, a shared inside.

It is frequently observed with reference to notions of the self in Southeast Asia, that whilst there are conceptualizations of an inner self consisting of vital force or potency, this self, like the spiritual potency of which it is constituted, is only manifest or indexed in the everyday encounters of social interaction and exchange (Keeler 87:37-38; Errington 1989: 131-132.) Rafael (1988), writing in the context of Philippine exchange forms, has further challenged the notion of an inner self, such as that suggested by the Tagalog *utang na loob*, 'debts of the inside' commonly glossed 'a debt of gratitude' (which may be considered analogous to *remembrances*, Hollensteiner 1972; Kiefer 1968b). In particular, Rafael (88:124-126) argues that the 'inside' has been mistakenly privileged as having an ontological reality either as the originary source of gifts or as a privileged interiority, as it did in Spanish missionary texts where it was often translated as soul, will or conscience. The Tagalog word *loob*, or inside, however, has a wide semantic range, which can denote not only the inside of a person, but the inside of an object or house. It is also a space for the containment of things which comes from the outside. Thus, Rafael writes,

In being attached to the word for debt, the inside figures both as the site and the object of exchange. It [the inside] is constituted by objects in circulation just as it functions to represent the desired form of

circulation. *Utang na loob* from this perspective is not only a debt of gratitude, but also a debt of, from and for the "inside"...(88:125)

Following Rafael, I argue that *remembrancing* is not simply about the manifestation of the self. Rather, *remembrances*, in Rafael's terms, might be said to "mark out" spaces of and for reciprocally realized or shared insides, and what I wish to highlight here is the process of objectification (Munn 1986; Miller 1987; Strathern 1989) at work in the constitution of these *remembrances* spaces. Specifically, just as *ilmu*' may be considered sedimentation of potency, so too *remembrances* may be considered sedimentation of the self. Moreover, it is only through gifting - that is investing oneself in an object, placing oneself in circulation and receiving *remembrances* from other persons - that one is fully constituted as a human person or social self. It is thus that these circulating objects become indexical signs or manifestations of one's reciprocally realized or shared inside(s).

These processes are clearly exemplified in the seven day celebrations (*paghinang tu, pitu*) following death, which are commonly said to be *remembrance* celebrations. Whilst the *paghinang tu, pitu* refer directly to the third and seventh day celebratory meal which is prepared by the family and served to guests, an important part of the seven day ritual process is what is called the *pagjagahan kulangan*, which might be translated as, "keeping watch over the sleeping place." After a person dies and has been buried, a sleeping place (*kulangan*) is prepared which may either be a mat (*baluy*) or in wealthier families a bed (*kantil*). Placed at the head of the bed on top of the pillows will be some or all of a person's clothing, the blanket and sarong which they slept in and sometimes other objects associated with that person. Many if not most of these objects will be distributed as *remembrances* in the form of *sarraka patay* (alms given on behalf of the dead), to various ritual specialist, relatives and others who assist in the proceedings. In some homes, a tray with biscuits, cigarettes (if the person was a man) which are continually kept lit, a glass of water, a cup of coffee as well as a small earthenware censer in which incense is burned will be placed at the foot of the bed. Throughout the night, whilst the household stays up playing

games and gambling, women *pakil* (minor religious officials) read, recite or sing portions of the Qur'an (Figures 3.5 & 3.6).

In bringing together the familiar objects of bedding, clothing and other objects associated with the deceased, as well as by bringing together the range of persons with whom a person would conceivably have had some kind of *remembrancing* relation, the vital force or potency of a person is reembodied and made manifest. Thus, the seven day celebrations are sometimes referred to as *buhi' patay* - "as if the dead were alive" - or *sabumagad* which might best be translated as a presencing of the life soul. Moreover, the serving of snacks, the feasting and the distribution of the persons clothing and other objects as *remembrances* in the form of *sarraka*, ensures the ongoing presence of the vital force of the dead within the multiplicity of relations represented by guests who are in attendance at these *remembrance* celebrations. To die without having been remembered in such a celebration is to die like an animal.

Remembrancing, as a central process through which the self is manifest and reciprocally constituted, however, is by no means primarily or exclusively centred around death and the deceased, but rather is implicated in the entire human career. Perhaps the paradigmatic *remembrancing* relation is between parent and child, and it is frequently the idiom within which other *remembrancing* relations are spoken. Children are said to be *panumtuman umbul satu*, "the greatest *remembrances* one could have", and are, by virtue of having been given life and grown up by their parents, said to be in an eternal *remembrancing* relation with them.

The human fetus is understood to be formed through the mixture of both the father's and mother's sexual substance, variously referenced as *daging*, *janiit* or *manni'*. These substances, which originate in the liver (*atay*, the seat of the emotions, of memory and of longing), are seen as fundamentally invested with *nyawa* (life-force) or as one man put it in reference to semen, *tau way pa simulig*, "persons who have as of yet not grown up." That semen is thus invested is seen in the fact that semen ejaculated outside of a woman's body (either during intercourse or through masturbation) may become a disembodied spirit, such as a *jin saytan* (malevolent

spirit), a point which has important implications for understandings of sexuality and gender as I discuss in Chapter 5 below.

As in other parts of Southeast Asia a homology is locally drawn between the human body and the "traditional" house (Errington 1989; Waterson 1992). Specifically, what is emphasized is the relation between the growing up of the human person and the building of the house (Jainal, et al 1972). Just as in the development of the human fetus the umbilical cord appears first, followed by upper part of the body, the head and shoulders, and then the lower part of the body, the hips, etc., so to the traditional house was/is to be built around the central pole (*pusud*) followed by two posts corresponding to the shoulders, etc. It is important here to cross-reference this bodily correspondence with the relationship between the actual physical process of the completion of the house and the coming into being of the vital force of the house (Endicott 1970) for in common with other Indonesian/Malay understandings, there is a direct relation between the development of the fetus and the gradual attachment or coming into being of the life-soul of the individual body.

The development of the human subject is thus tied to an ongoing process of embodiment or objectification. Moreover, in highlighting the processual nature of the growing up and embodiment of the life-soul, what is emphasized is the continual investment of parental "substance" through which both the body and the life-force of the spirit develops. The investment of sexual fluids (by both parents) in the fetus is replaced by breast milk (which is similar to and symbolically analogous to semen) in infants which is replaced in turn by shared meals which centre around rice. Each is equally invested with parental selves, each meal, every provision, every event considered to be a *remembrance*.⁷

One of the first rituals observed by parents following on the birth of a child is the *pagtimbang*, the ritual weighing (cf. P. Armour 1992:5). The ritual itself is quite simple. A pole is balanced on the shoulders of the child's father. Attached to one end of the pole is a *habul* (sarong) made into a cradle in which the baby is placed. Attached to the other end of the pole is a bag of rice, sugar cane, two old coconuts

and a chicken which is placed on top of the pole. One or more Imam or Pakil (ritual specialist) bless the baby, reciting selected portions from the Qur'an. After the child is taken out of the sling, the rice, sugar cane, coconuts and chicken are given to persons in attendance, usually the Imam or Pakil who assist with the ritual, as *remembrances* in the form of *sarraka* (charitable alms).

One of the reasons given for performing the ritual, in the unelaborated "just so" manner, was that if one did not perform the ritual then it would be as if their child was not valued (*way halga'*) by them, a sentiment which was sometimes expressed in relation to death celebrations. I would suggest, however, that this negatively inflected response, positively signals at least part of the intent of these rituals. That is, in a fairly straightforward manner one can interpret these ritual weighings as a symbolic statement of a child's worth.

First of all, it should be noted that the objects against which a child is balanced, the chicken, coconuts, sugar cane and rice, are goods often associated in ritual contexts both with forbears and fecundity. This horizontal rendering of a vertical, cross-generational relation in which the father (as the representative of both parents) is the pivotal point, is another way of demonstrating that the *nyawa* (life-force) with which a child has been formed is not simply potency in general, but the life-force or soul of his/her parents forbears and their ancestral kindred. This ancestral life force is channelled through parents and reembodied - "remembered" -in their children.

Secondly, these objects which represent ancestral investment, do not remain static, but given as *sarraka*, are in turn placed in wider circulation. Indeed it is only by being gifted that they become "envehicled meanings" (Geertz 1980:133); living *remembrances*. The wider point is that one's value - one's place in social memory - is not simply equivalent to the ancestral material of which one is formed or sedimented, but of the subsequent *remembrancing* relations which one enters into and through which ancestral life-force develops.⁸

Remembrancing is not about recollection in the sense of being able to trace and

enumerate one's ancestors back through time as might be expected in the conventional view of memory as a stored fund of images collected in the past which are transmitted and activated through various mnemonic representations. Rather *remembrancing* signals the transactional processes through which one's own and by extension one's forbears' image is constituted in the present (cf. Kuchler 1987). A good example of this can be seen in two important related items of a household possessions, *pusaka*' (heirlooms or house valuables) and *laminates* (framed photographs). *Pusaka*', which traditionally included everything from *ilmu*' (religious and or esoteric knowledge/power) to land, gold jewellery, bronze vessels and or various bladed weapons such as the *kris*, do not simply represent the transference of material value, but the investment in, sedimentation and transference of, parental, and by extension ancestral, spiritual substance or potency. To lose or sell these *remembrances* is to bring a curse (*makabusung*) from the ancestors, all of which fits with the wider literature on island Southeast Asia where sacred heirlooms are often identified with an originary source or ancestral point of origin for social groupings centred around particular houses (cf. Errington 1989, Waterson 1992).

However, like local genealogical knowledge (cf. Chapter 4 below), the particular historical biography of *pusaka*' is comparatively shallow, and does not usually extend back further than two generations. Moreover, contrary to what I had expected, given both what I had previously read about *pusaka*' and what local persons had told me about traditional heirlooms, in practise almost any gift given as a *remembrance* could potentially become *pusaka*', as the following example from one of the households where I lived in Jolo illustrates.

In the house is a old and a large wooden cased black and white console T.V. which sits up off of the slatted bamboo floor whilst on top of the television sits a cassette-radio stereo, both of which are covered by a cloth when not in use. In addition the television has a curtain attached on the front of the screen which is drawn during the day. Both of these are gifts of *remembrances* (*panumtuman*) which were given to *bapa*' K.S., the eldest man and head of the household. The radio-cassette was given to him by his eldest daughter who has now been in Sabah for the last six

years, and whose picture hung directly over the television and radio. The television was given to him some years back by his eldest sister's daughter, whom he had taken care of for a time when she was younger, and who had also paid for the installation of their one fluorescent light fixture. Describing the television and the radio, *bapa'* said:

This is not a gift like a shirt, which within a year will tear and be thrown out or used as a rag, but a gift which even if it goes bad, we will keep and display forever. It is a *pangita'an*, a *remembrance*. It cannot be pawned or sold. It is like those other 'antiques' (used English word antique), those things which make up real *panumtuman*, and are given as *pusaka'* - [inherited items of *remembrance*]. Things which are around and are held forever. If we sell them then we will be cursed."

Similarly, what emerged in a survey of household's and home interiors was that although gold jewellery was still regarded by many persons as an important form of *remembrance* or *pusaka'*, other persons said that the most important thing one could invest in and bequeath to one's children as *pusaka'* was education (*iskul*). Not surprisingly education figures as an important theme of *laminates*. *Laminates* consist of photographs (*kodak* or *pata'*) which are framed either as individual pictures but more often than not as a collage of snapshots. The frame/framing process most commonly used is a simple process in which a picture or collage of pictures together with an embossed gold foil border are mounted on a finished wood panel with a thin veneer of clear lacquer. The finished product is called a *laminate*, and at present are a basic and almost universal element of home decoration.⁹

Given as visible items of *remembrance* (*pangita'an*), *laminates* frame and represent occasions which are also *remembrances*. These occasions include various life-cycle and calendarical religious events- *paghinang*, such as the *pagtimbang* (ritual weighing) described above, which shares many similar elements with the Javanese *salamatan* described by Geertz (1960). Also included are the more recent, increasingly important and mainly "secular" celebrations, including birthdays, but more especially graduation parties (which are held for graduates of every level, from nursery to

graduate degrees). Diplomas, awards and pictures of school events also feature as *laminates*.

Laminates and laminating I would argue are not simply elements of home decoration and decorating techniques, any more than traditional heirlooms were simply household curios. Rather, *laminates* are both vehicles for and witnesses of the ongoing *remembrancing* relations through which persons (and through them their forbears) in are constituted as a social presence or memory. Moreover, what *laminates*, like *pusaka*', signal is the dynamic and potentially transformative potential of *remembrancing* and objectification. To put it otherwise, identity is not primarily conceived as something fixed in the past - a question of remembering who one is -, but as a continuously evolving set of relationships mediated by variously conceived images within, and through which, persons enact as they reciprocally create social memory.

3.3 Remembrancing and Hierarchy: The structure of political practise in Sulu.

Remembrancing relations are one of the primary things which are seen to differentially define the human subject. This is otherwise referenced in terms of *martabat*, self-awareness and *pagkatau*, human dignity and self-respect, literally that which renders one a human person. Self awareness, as Errington (1989) amongst others have noted with regards to other Southeast Asian sensibilities, is different from most of our commonly held western assumptions about the individuated self. Specifically what *martabat* signals is an awareness of oneself as relation, or to paraphrase Strathern (1989) the self as product of relations. This is clearly seen in the constellation of concepts which surround the notion of *martabat* and *pagkatau*, such as *sipug-* (S *iya*') commonly glossed "shame" and *luman* (S *loman*), which is commonly glossed as an awareness of social place or status.

The sensibilities signalled by *martabat*, *sipug*, and *luman*, are all spoken of as attitudes which must be developed. Whilst children are born with the innate capacity for self awareness, parental, especially maternal responsibility, is seen to lie in the

inculcation of shame (Eslao 1962; Moore 1981; Bruno 1973:167; and see also Keeler 1987:56-84 and Errington 1989 for notes on child rearing in Luwu, Sulawesi and Java respectively) This is accomplished both through the child's observation of other persons' interactions, as well as through positive instruction, amongst other things, in the proper terms of reference and address to parents (and other classificatory parents/elders (*maas*) of parents generation and above), elder/younger siblings, neighbours, recognized high status individuals, strangers or non-kinsmen, etc However, the inculcation of shame is also accomplished through harsh scolding and verbal abuse (more rarely physical punishment) often directly expressed in terms of shame, *makasipug*, which serves both to mark out a child's relationship and relative status to other persons and to engender the various emotive states, including deference, distance, affrontedness and respect, which are signalled by shame.

Although this brief precis of shame and childhood instruction inadequately covers what is an extremely complex and multifaceted process, the main point I wish to make here is that the house, in addition to being the primary space within which persons are constituted as having a distinct social presence, is also the primary space both within which persons learn to recognize and read themselves - that is their status or the quality of their presence - and within which the disposition, in Bourdieu's (1977:214) terms, towards engaging in reciprocal exchanges are engendered. Moreover, the familial idiom and the domestic space, which is primarily structured not around gender but around age and generation, signals the wider hierarchical and political implications of *remembrancing* relations.

It is important to be clear that the term hierarchy is used here in Dumont's (1972) sense of an encompassing ideological principle in which "persons and/or categories of persons are ranked or graded according to criteria of social or religious value that theoretically transcend immediate political and economic 'realities' (Ortner 1981:360)". In India this criteria is purity, in Polynesia it is *mana* (cf. Goldman 1970; Sahlins 1981), while in many parts of Southeast Asia, the encompassing ideological principle is potency, which in Sulu is, as I have detailed above, often referenced by the various and competing idiom(s) of *ilmu*', including the *ilmu*' *Islam*

and the *ilmu' Milikan*.¹⁰

Political practise, in fact, as others have demonstrated (cf. Anderson 1972; Geertz 1980; Keeler 1987 and Errington 1989) whilst often appearing simply to revolve around and rely on power in the sense of rational or instrumental violence and control, is also about revealing, accumulating and/or restricting access to potency, or as Errington (1989: 10) puts it,

Power or spiritual potency is itself invisible; people infer its presence by its signs. I have found it useful to regard the former kingdom of Luwu as a vast device, backed by (unstable) force, for restricting access to potency. Actually, since potency could not be perceived directly, it was not so much to potency as to the signs of potency, over which political entities had some control, that access was restricted.

Indeed, potency, like *mana*, is at once a much more ambiguous and fluid concept than purity, and may be manifest by a variety of persons in a variety of ways: in wealth and good fortune, strength (*kusug*-conceived of in terms economic resources, political influence or physical strength and violence), in esoteric knowledge and ability, in Qur'anic knowledge, education and professional occupation as well as beauty and *istyle* (style), including what might otherwise be called "status" or "prestige" goods. The point is that they are status symbols not only because they are visible manifestations of potency, but also because, whether it be Chinese silk or 'original' *Levis*, Arabic texts or English language, they are themselves understood to be invested with a certain quality or efficaciousness, a sensibility which I argue equally informs the traditional Sulu polity and the Sultan's emporium (Chapter 4) as it does contemporary *gay-bantut* beauty contests and the concern with education and American *istyle* (see Chapter 1 above and chapters 8-10 below).

However, there is more to status-hierarchy than simply the acquisition or manifestation of potency. That is the particular relational nature of hierarchical encompassment in which persons are seen to be sedimented out of a prior whole and only in respect to which they are seen to be properly constituted as social persons. In other words, hierarchy is relational not in the economic sense of an abstract, "structured set of oppositions, a system of differences" as Bourdieu (1984) writes of

social class and status, but in the sense that one's status within hierarchy is only realized through various reciprocal or gifting relations (Mauss 1954; Dumont 1972; Marriot 1976).

It is neither simply the case of inferiors owing material goods and services to superiors and superiors having reciprocal obligations to inferiors (*noblesse oblige*), as has often been suggested of patron client relations in the Philippines (Hollensteiner 1972), nor is it simply the case that one's status is made explicit in the influence one has over other persons in everyday encounter and exchange. Certainly one's status in these hierarchical systems is dependent upon being able to solicit recognition by another. Recognition by the other, however, is conditional upon their being encompassed, that is, having a share in and in turn being recognized as a constitutive part of, one's own status. The point is that whilst an individual may possess potency, this does not in and of itself constitute a status. Rather, the signs and sedimentation of one's potency must be placed in circulation as *remembrances*. To do otherwise is not simply to be labelled tight-fisted and mean spirited, but to have one's social identity, one's humanity called into question.

As I demonstrate below (Chapter 4) this process of hierarchical encompassment - which is often somewhat misleadingly glossed redistributive exchange - was a crucial aspect of the expansive and incorporative Sulu Sultanate. However, the implications of *remembrancing* relations, are not limited to the traditional Sulu polity nor do such relations unfold in a seamless web, as I elaborate with respect to relations amongst rich and poor in present day Jolo - the polarized terms reflecting both local social classifications as well as the genuine economic divide between the small affluent minority and large poor majority (see Chapter 8 below). Whilst the poor readily acknowledge wealthy persons' possession of, and hold over, things of a superior quality or potency, this recognition is usually framed either as a solicitation of and/or challenge to encompassment. In other words, the poor not only desire to have a share in but also at times press claims to and demand recognition of their constitutive part of the higher status of the wealthy. At the same time, whilst the poor signal the desirability of encompassment, they also deny the possibility that they would ever

allow themselves to be fully encompassed by the wealthy.

It is the contested and conflictual nature of hierarchy (as well as, I would add, a failure to adequately theorize the specific form of hierarchy in the first place) which was/is often glossed over both in functionalist as well as more radical accounts of political relations amongst patrons and clients, rich and poor in the Philippines.¹¹ This is clearly seen in the analysis of shame which was/is usually interpreted as a public sentiment and normative social sanction which operates to maintain and assure the smooth workings of reciprocal behaviour both between persons of equal and unequal status (Hollensteiner 1972).

However, as Kiefer (1972b) and more recently Rafael (1988), amongst others, have argued, the "sentiments" of shame do not simply accompany and sanction reciprocal obligations, but are central to the intent and imperative of the process in the first place (see also Errington 1989; Keeler 1987). In brief, "shame" expresses a range of emotive situations. On the one hand, it may express a sense of vulnerability- "an inability to fend off the signs which come from the outside by performing a response adequate to what one has received (Rafael 88:126)". Thus, shame may register humiliation or embarrassment. On the other hand, in a more positive sense it may indicate mutual recognition, respect and deference. More importantly, "shame" always indicates a directionality towards and readiness to engage in reciprocal exchange. As Kiefer (1972b:68) suggests in his ethnography of the Tausug, shame (*sipug*) is ultimately not a statement of what is but a statement of what will be.

This highlights an important distinction between South and Southeast Asian hierarchical transforms. In South Asia status is largely ascribed according to the well defined ideological criteria of purity, and is reproduced seemingly mechanically across society. In insular Southeast Asian hierarchical transforms, however, status is not, for the most part, ascribed, but is indexed in a myriad different ways. Thus, every encounter between two individuals holds potential status implications. This is equally true of relative status peers as between persons of seemingly incommensurable status.

Nevertheless, there have been, and continue to be, attempts by individuals and groups of individuals to fix or solidify their status within hierarchy. The clearest example of this is the historical Sulu Sultanate, wherein through the appropriation of Islamic ideology and the establishment of an Islamic polity, local chiefs (*datus*) were able to create and enact a separation between aristocratic or noble elite (the Sultan and his aristocratic kindred) from non-noble chiefs as between chiefs and commoners and commoners and slaves. However, even this hierarchical configuration was as much dependent upon, and subject to, changing networks of reciprocal relationships as upon inherited status and ancestral linkages.

I detail the historical rise, florescence and contours of political practise in the Sulu polity and consider the transformations (including the implications for status-hierarchy) which occurred in Sulu society as a result of its break up and subsequent incorporation within the American colonial and post-colonial Philippine State in Chapter 4. The point I wish to make here with respect to the *ilmu' Islam* and the *ilmu' Milikan*, the two terms which are rooted in and grew out of these particular historical periods, is that *ilmu'* signals more than simply the indexical signs of an indeterminate form of power. Rather it is always part of or attached to a larger system of meanings or signification, a conceptual order of the world, such as Islam or America, which amongst other things articulates a particular set of political or ideological relations. It is in this wider Foucaultian (1980b) sense that *ilmu'* may be considered a local system of knowledge-power (cf. also Anderson 1972:43-47 on the relation between knowledge and power (potency) in Indonesia).

I argue, however, that signification, the order of things, is understood by local persons to be not just a logical system of relations, but a moral and political process. That is to say signification is continually being evaluated and re-evaluated on the basis of the relations through which it is given its determinate form. In short, whilst *ilmu'* signals both a system of indexical signs through which power or spiritual potency is presented, and the attempt to delimit an order of operations and give it a determinate form, *remembrancing* is understood to be the basis on which human being as meaningful subject is constituted.

There are two final points I would make in this respect. Firstly, in light of what I have outlined above, it is clear that what the teachings of the *ustadz* (professors, see section 3.1 above) represent is another set of ideological relations in which persons are ostensibly ranked according to their relative ignorance or knowledge of the Qur'an and their ability to articulate and discriminate between various legal interpretations. At a deeper level, however, what is perceived and resisted in the teachings of the *ustadz* is a system which ignores the social processes of *remembrancing* through which meaning is constituted and evaluated. This is perhaps why criticism of the *ustadz* often focuses on their reported neglect of *martabat* (self-awareness) and explains why Islamist have largely failed in their attempt to persuade people (including those amongst the educated elite who are otherwise inclined to follow Islamist teaching) to quit their death celebrations.

Finally, I would just briefly indicate some of the implications of what I have outlined above for an understanding of the *gay/bantut*. In outlining local notions of spiritual power or potency in the first part of a thesis in which questions related to gender ambiguity are a central focus, I am following the lead of other theorists who have argued that gender is best understood only within the context of what is termed status or prestige systems (Ortner and Whitehead 1981). As Errington (1990:58) puts it within the specific context of the local region,

In island Southeast Asia, differences between people, including men and women, are often attributed to the activities the people in question engage in or the spiritual power they exhibit or fail to exhibit. If we want to understand gender there, we cannot begin with gendered bodies but must understand local ideas of power and prestige; the next step is to ask how people defined as male, female or something else are mapped onto, as it were, the prestige and power systems.

As I argue at length below (Chapters 5-10), the *gay/bantut* emerge as celebrated and celebratory figures whose potency is exhibited not only in their possession of *istyle*, but also in the influence they exert over other persons as performative creators of beauty. On the other hand, however, they emerge as tragic figures who are largely unable to convert this power into a status. This relates both to their ambiguous engenderment as impotent men and unproductive women - those who are unable to

reproduce *remembrances* - as well as to their experiences with men who continually subvert their attempts at reciprocal sociality, or *remembrancing* relations.

Endnotes.

1. *Anting-anting* (the term *anting* is used in many parts of the Philippines) is used synonymously both with *ilmu* or *bassahun* in referencing efficacious words or utterances and with *habai* in reference to amulets. There are many different kinds of *anting-anting*. The *adjimat* consists of a piece of paper with a portion of the Qur'an written on it, which is wrapped up in cloth and which may be carried around in a small pouch. *Buku* is a specially knotted cord worn around the waist, which may contain other objects including what were described to me as petrified wood and calcified cat eggs (Figure 3.1). Another amulet distinct from but related to *anting-anting* is the *anak ridjal nanumbaga*, which is said to be a miscarried human child which is naturally preserved and solidified. Amulets like the latter are "kept" or "looked after" and on *Dum Jumaat* (the night prior to Friday prayers in the Mosque), persons will light incense, offer food and make petitions to them. The family of one of my first language assistants looked after such a *anak ridjal nanumbaga*, and he related to me how, on approaching his nursing entry examinations, he had asked it for and received assistance in passing his exam. Moreover, this amulet was passed between various family members, accompanying them into situations perceived to be dangerous, including trips to fight in the *gimba* (hinterlands) of Jolo island.

2. Horvatic (1994: 817) notes that Islamist reformers refer to themselves as *ahmadi*, although this does not necessarily imply a strict relationship with the *Ahmaddiya*. In Simunul it appears to be used more as a way of defining an opposition or critique of the traditional orthodoxy of local Imams.

3. Although education appears to be a dominant factor here, to some extent this distinction between those who follow the ways of the *ustadz* and those who follow the ways of the *kamaasan*, is mapped out in terms of internal cleavages between the Muslim Tausug and Sama, the latter of whom are often said, by the former, to follow traditional practises. However, there are also many among the Tausug who dispute more Islamist teaching and continue to overtly practise more traditional religious forms, just as Sama 'from the South' are recognized as being more progressive.

4. I derive the notion of 'texture' and 'textuality' from recent discussions about the wider implications of, and implications for, literacy and orality in terms of different kinds cosmology, memory and cultural reproduction, such as the distinction Connerton (1989:72-9) draws between 'incorporating' and 'inscribing' practises (cf. also Rowlands 1993). The implications of modern education (Eickelmann 1992, cited in Horvatic 1994) is something which I have already hinted at in terms of beauty in Chapter 2, and which I explore in more detail in subsequent chapters as it relates to a variety of issues besides Islamic understanding.

5. The interpretation of *remembrancing* I outline here articulates with recent theorizing about social memory and identity which has increasingly stressed the processual over the static. Handler (1994), for instance, suggests that identity might best be thought of not as a thing in itself, but as a process of communication, a point previously made by Anderson (1983). Fentress and Wickham (1992) similarly suggest that rather than treat memory as a thing which first stores and copies information and images and then enables their creative reassembly in recall, the question is what constitutes the experience - or what in Casey's (1987) terminology might be called the phenomenology - of memory (see also Kuchler and Melion 1991). As Rowlands (1993:143) points out, however, there still remains an implicit assumption that memory starts with, and is about, the transmission or the connection(s) (albeit socially constructed and dynamic) with an image in the past. By contrast, what is locally specified by *remembrancing*, I argue, is not so much a past, but a present, or perhaps better a social presencing.

6. Although I have heard of people who are said to sell "love charms" - that is *ilmu*' either in the form of *bassahun* (efficacious utterances) or *anting-anting* (amulets) of some kind - which could be used to attract a member of the opposite sex, in my experience, even the acquisition of this kind of *ilmu*' in practise is spoken about not in terms of monetary transaction but in terms of a gift.

7. Janet Carsten (1990:425) makes a similar point when she says, "Kinship can be viewed as a process of becoming, and this process involves a complex of ideas which centre on *shared* [my emphasis] consumption in one house."

8. Huede le Guen (SERC, Aix-en-Provence) who is working on Tausug folklore and mythology first pointed out the symbolic significance of this ritual to me in conversations together at the 2nd annual Philippine Studies Conference, 1994.

9. This same process of "laminating" (cf. Miller 1990:54) can be seen, moreover, in glass cupboards in which are displayed and protected the accumulated *remembrances* acquired throughout the years. Toys, for instance, while having a specific "use value" as children's play things, are usually placed carefully back into their boxes or plastic covering, behind the glass or up on a shelf and generally retain this sense of being laminated, protected and set apart as visible items of *remembrance*.

10. Although there are important differences between Hinduism and Malay traditional religious beliefs (notably the lack of a caste system with its ascribed categories of purity and pollution), Endicott's (1970) analysis of *sumangat* is similar to Dumont's (1972) analysis of Hindu religious beliefs in as much as things and persons are arranged hierarchically according to the essence which they possess, with those things/persons possessing higher essences conceptually at least incorporating and encompassing those of lower essences (cf. Benjamin 1979).

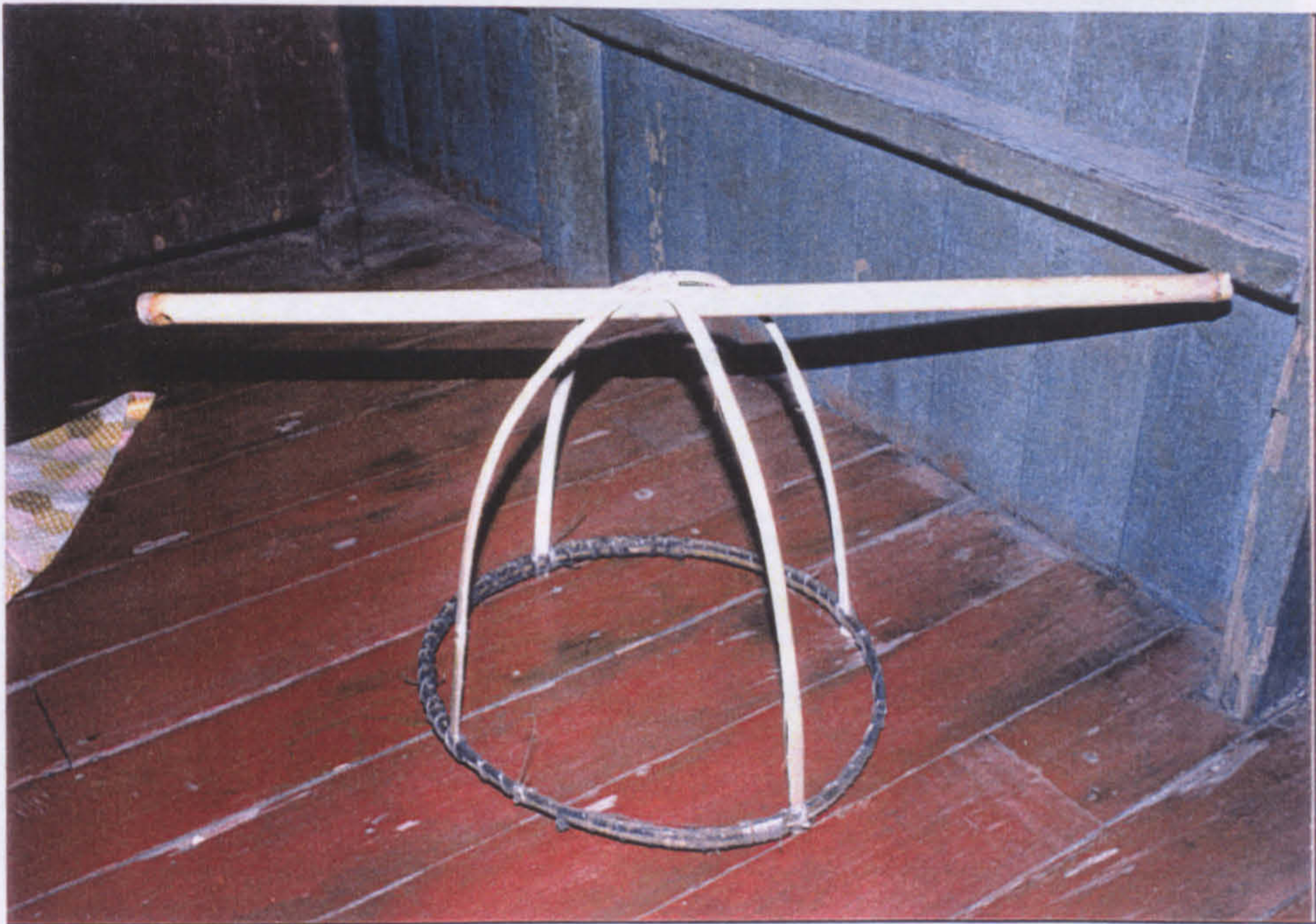
11. In particular recent attempts (cf. Kerkvliet 1990) to get to grips with the changing nature of patron-client relationships in the Philippines have rightly criticized early functionalist writing (cf. Hollensteiner 1963; Lande 1965) as emphasizing the

normative at the expense of the political contestation involved. Equally, however, in pointing out that reciprocal relations are subject to negotiation, what is often missed out in patron-client analysis is not the specifically class oriented nature of the relation, but the hierarchical nature of the relationship in which as Kapferer (1988:235) suggests in a different but related context, "the client finds personal integrity through an embodiment in the patron" (and cf. my discussion of master-slave relationship in Chapter 4.3 below).



Figures 3.1 and 3.2 The author with a Tausug man (above) in western style suit and (below) a picture of the amulets which he wears for protection.





Figures 3.3 and 3.4 A *pogot* (divining stick figure) (above) and (below) the *pogot* being dressed and brought to life.





Figures 3.5 and 3.6 The *kulangan* (resting place of the deceased) of a relatively poor deceased Sama man (above) and (below) the *kulangan* of relatively wealthy deceased Tausug man.



Chapter 4. History and the Politics of Objectification: The Transformations of Local Identity.

4.1 Introduction: Theoretical and Methodological Notes.

In this chapter I present a brief overview of Sulu history. The first part of the chapter traces the appropriation of Islam and the rise of the Sulu Sultanate. The second explores the florescence of the polity during the 18th and early 19th century. The third and fourth are concerned with the structural changes and transformations which occurred in Sulu in the late 19th and 20th century under the Spanish, American and subsequently Filipino post-colonial State. In the last section, I present my reading of the current (at the time of field work) political and economic situation in Sulu.

It is important to note that this chapter does not represent any primary historical research as such. Rather, drawing on widely available sources, I have attempted to set out within a comparative perspective the broad contours of local history. My primary purpose in doing so is, on the one hand, to enlarge and locate the theoretical framework which I have outlined in the preceding chapter, and to indicate aspects of the "intelligible relation" between the symbolic and economic (Bourdieu 1977; 1979). On the other hand, I have highlighted these historical movements because the transformations which they entail not only inform but also provide the precedents for what is an ongoing process of appropriation and cultural transformation (Sahlins 1981). This chapter thus serves to fill out more of the immediate historical context within which the discourse of beauty and America, on the one hand, and the discourse of Islam and local Muslim identity, on the other, have emerged and taken shape.

4.2 The Introduction of Islam and the Rise of the Sulu Polity.

The introduction of Islam into the Indo-Malaysian archipelago, as with the rise of coastal polities with which this process is associated, has been the focus for much historical and speculative work (cf. Brown 1970; Drewes 1968; Fatemi 1968; Hall 1977; Hooker 1983; Johns 1975, 81; Kiefer 1972a; Milner 1983; Reid 1993). The sketch I wish to make here draws largely on Caesar Majul's (1973) work *Muslims in*

the Philippines, because he is concerned not only with the general expansion and spread of Islam into insular Southeast Asia, but also with its particular movement into the Philippines. His work also fits within the generally accepted historical-chronological framework of Islamicization in Southeast Asia.

While Arabs and Muslim merchants were regularly trading with Southeast Asia by the end of the first millennium A.D., broad patterns of Islamicization really began between the 13th-15th centuries with Muslim polities springing up throughout the archipelago; Samudra-Pasai and Perlak in Sumatra in the late 13th century, Malacca and the coastal states of Java in the 15th century, Brunei, Sulu and Ternate in the mid to late 15th century (Majul 1973: 37-39; Roff 1985).¹ As Majul notes, there have been various theories which have tried to explain why, at this particular point in time, Islam became firmly established in the region. One theory postulates an increased number of traders-cum-religious leaders or merchants with missionaries-in-tow who either through proclamation and/or intermarriage with ruling families brought about the 'conversion' of local populations. Another - the crusader theory - suggests that this phenomenon was the result of an Islamic response to Christian expansion in the region. Finally, another set of theories focuses on the political-economic background within which the expansion of Islam occurred. Specifically, Islam is seen as filling the political and ideological vacuum created by the declining Hindu-Buddhist Madjapahit and contributing to the development of small coastal trading states.²

This latter theory best seems to fit the situation in Sulu, where the process of Islamicization is closely linked to the establishment of the Sulu Sultanate. However, it is important to note that while Sulu clearly had some exposure to Hindu-Buddhist influences either from *Sri Vijaya* or *Madjapahit*, as is evident, amongst other things, by references to Vedic deities such as *Jamiyun Kulisa* and *Indira* in historical documents (Saleeby 1908/1963), there is no conclusive archaeological or historical evidence, as of yet, to suggest that there were any pre-Islamic *rajas* in Sulu. Thus, as Casino (1976:25) suggests, "Islamic influence seems to have been the main force in the rise of feudal states in Mindanao and Sulu".³

But why or how was Islam instrumental to the rise of an increasingly stratified society? I should like to begin answering this question by summarizing Scott's (1982:96-126) and Rafael's (1988:136-166) interpretations of Pre-Hispanic Tagalog society which may be taken, I think, as broadly indicating the contours of Sulu society prior to the establishment of the Sultanate. Both characterize Pre-Hispanic society as a system in which persons were differentially defined or ranked along a continuum from slaves to village leaders or *datu*s through relations of indebtedness. Status was reflected in, and depended upon, one's ability to solicit recognition in reciprocal exchanges. Thus, being a *datu* (chief) was, as Kiefer (1972a) has similarly noted, a product of one's ability to attract a sizeable following through the establishment of obligations with others. As Rafael (1988:141) argues,

This is not to say that the *datu* caused exchange. The substance of his position as the *pono* (leader) and as a *maginoo* was his reputation for acting in a way that allowed for the operation of exchange and indebtedness. In other words, being a *datu* depended on being recognized as such not by an authority outside the *barangay* but by those within it. . . Rank in this case does not belong to what "naturally" belongs to one by virtue of a genealogy or the sanction of an outside power.

The Sulu polity is interesting precisely in this regard, in as much as the appropriation of Islam by local *datu*s represented an attempt to delimit the channels through which spiritual power or potency flowed. Indeed, it is not fortuitous that the primary historical documents relating to the introduction of Islam and the establishment of the Sultanate are the *tarsilas* (Arabic *silsilah*, chain), genealogical accounts of the Sulu nobility written in the local Jawi script (a mixture of Arabic, Malay and Tausug). These are supplemented by the *khutbahs* and *kitab*s, special orations or sermons and collections of historical notes concerning the sultans (Saleeby 1963 [1908]; Kiefer 1972a; Majul 1973).

As Errington (1989), following Wolters (1982), suggests, ancestry is a critical factor distinguishing level from hierarchical societies within which she calls the "centrist archipelago". The "centrist archipelago" refers to those societies - broadly stretching from the Malay peninsula through Borneo, dipping down to Java, extending up into

the Philippines and across Sulawesi to the Moluccas - whose social and symbolic forms tend to emphasize centres rather than dualities, as is the case in Eastern Indonesia. The key feature of the "centrist archipelago" is what Errington, following Freeman (1960), calls sibling-centred kinship. In terms of relationship terminologies, Ego and his/her siblings and cousins (considered cognatically) tend to be classed together. Thus, relations are divided into successive strata of siblings moving away from Ego's layer of siblings. Inside these layers are Ego's "kindred", which may be subdivided into groups of full (zero-degree) siblings which forms a mini-set within the larger kin grouping, while outside lies a "hostile blank" of non-kin and potential enemies.⁴

These "sibling-centred" kindred's may be said to form a "house" with a common ancestor: "The ancestral origin is often labelled by a word including the root *pu* or *fu* [as for instance in the word *pusaka* or the word *pu*, island]. *Pu* implies a unitary point in the past (ancestral or residential) a cause, a source, an ancestor, a place of origin (Errington 1989:205)". This unitary ancestral point, source of potency, through time divides into generational layers of siblings, each layer moving further away from the source. Each descending layer is thus in a position of deference to the layers above them. Moreover, as I suggested in the previous chapter (3.3), this generational sequence is not only the primary basis of relative societal standing or status but also, and more importantly, encapsulates and encodes the general principles of hierarchy.

However what, amongst other things, distinguishes the more level from the more hierarchical groups, and in particular those groups where hierarchy is institutionalized, is the concern or not with genealogy. For a variety of reasons, amongst the more level societies (including commoner groups within institutionalized hierarchical societies) persons rarely trace their forbears back beyond three or four generations, producing what Clifford and Hildred Geertz (1964) have called genealogical amnesia. This is certainly the case in Sulu, both amongst the Tausug and Sama, where apart from persons who make claims to being *tagbangsa* (royal ancestry) persons rarely have a knowledge of their particular forbears beyond two or

three generations deep, and even then, as elsewhere in the region, will usually not (if the person in question is deceased) refer to the particular individual by name. Four generations is the linguistic limit beyond which lies the eternal mythical world of a persons forbears (*kamaas-maasan/kamattoa'an*) who are often associated with a particular island (*pu*) and/or specific locality on an island such as a mountain. The point is, Errington (1989: 216; cf also Atkinson 1991; Wolter 1982) argues, that whilst particular commoners may obtain and be considered extremely potent in their life time, there is no way of conveying this automatically to their children.

I would put it a slightly different way, for, as I have suggested previously, children represent not just the sedimentation of parental substance and potency but also through them some of their forbears substance or potency. Thus, it is slightly misleading (at least in the context of local sensibilities) to talk of genealogical amnesia, since each succeeding generation does represent the visible traces or *remembrances* of ancestral substance. The problem is rather one of concentration and of connection. That is to say, on the one hand, ancestral substance which is embodied in the innumerable tracings or remembrances is comparatively dilute, whilst, on the other hand, the spiritual potency of the forbears itself remains a vague and diffuse source of power. Thus, in common with strategies employed throughout the region, persons attempt to acquire through a variety of means additional sources of potency. At the same time, as is common with many of the Sama groups in Sulu and to a lesser extent among the Tausug, there are attempts usually by localized kindreds to locate and maintain a hold over ancestral power and substance. This is clearly seen in the various ritual practices amongst the Sama of *umbo'* (ancestors) and *ntan* (to hold on to) and amongst the Tausug of *Kadja* which as often as not centre on particular locations, ancestral houses (*luma umbo*), or *pusaka'* (inherited items of remembrance).

Nevertheless, the ties with these ancestral sources of power remain at best tenuous. By contrast, the *tsarsila* (Sulu genealogies), not only established and firmly fixed the ultimate source of potency (Allah) and traced the lines of inheritance along which the divine charisma (*barakat*) flowed, but also, as part of the *pusaka'* (royal heirlooms)

and regalia of the Sultanate, were themselves infused with and conveyed charisma.⁵ What Errington (1989: 231) notes with regards to the *lontara*' (*luntar* in Sulu, Tan 1989:24), the palm leaf manuscripts on which were recorded the genealogies and jottings about the nobility in Luwu, South Sulawesi, might equally be said of the Sulu genealogies.

Lontara' present themselves physically to their reader-owners, the descendants of those who produced them, in much the way they can be apprehended conceptually: as an assemblage more than as a narrative. Stored as sacred heirlooms or objects inherited from the ancestors (*mana*'), these jottings are talismans as well as manuscripts. They are a special sort, for in the process of being read/uttered (*baca*), they put the reader into a state of awareness of the ancestors, and of who he or she is.

The mythic history recounted in the Sulu *tsarsila* presents four movements in the coming of Islam and the founding of the Sultanate. The first movement recounts the arrival or appearance of *Tuan Masha'ika* whose name, as Majul notes (1973:52), is the plural form of *sheiks*, an Arabic term for respected elders or saints. (*Mashayikh* is used to refer to descendants of local saints.) *Tuan Masha'ika* intermarries with the local nobility, and subsequently in the genealogies, local chiefs are referred to as *sheiks*. Thus, the first movement not only introduces Islam as a symbolic marker of hierarchical place or potency, but also introduces the principle of hereditary descent or ancestry.

The second movement recounts the arrival of the *makhdum*, missionary-preachers and miracle workers, who it is said attracted large followings, presumably by their miraculous feats such as walking on water, flying, and saving drowning persons. The miracles, however, rather than simply being "pious" commemorations (Majul 1973:6) are precisely the main point, indexical signs of potency. Ancestry in itself is not enough, although this principle is continued, as evidenced in the designations of Sharif and Sayyid used in reference to the *makhdum* which denotes not only descent but descent from the Prophet Muhammad himself. Ancestry must connect with a source of spiritual power: the miracles, then, were sign and signifier of this potent connection.

The third movement recounts the arrival of Raja Baguinda, the latter name being an honorific title for prince, who is accompanied by *orangkayas* ("men of means"). Originally greeted with open hostility by the Sheiks's, he is treated with respect and hospitality when the local rulers learn that he is a Muslim. Subsequently he takes a local bride. Not only does this introduce the principle of kingship and nobility, but also, in common with the stranger king scenario found throughout Oceania, the king is represented to come from a foreign country.⁶

The final movement corresponds to the arrival of Sayid Abu Bakr, the first sultan. The Sulu genealogy records his arrival as follows:

After that time came Sayid Abu Bakr from Palembang to Bruney and from there to Sulu. When he arrived near the latter place he met some people and asked them: "Where is your town and where is your place of worship?" They said, "At Bwansa." He then came to Bwansa and lived with Rajah Baginda. The people respected him, and he established a religion for Sulu. They accepted the religion and declared their faith in it. After that Sayid Abu Bakr married Paramisuli, the daughter of Raja Baginda, and he received the title of Sultan Sharif (Majul 73: 56).

There are several important things to note about Abu Bakr. First, he is alternately called Sayid or Sharif, denoting his ancestral connections with the Prophet. Second, his marriage to the Raja Baguinda's daughter establishes his connection with foreign royalty, and at the same time is a statement of his superior status (the principle of hypergamy), in the same way that Raja Baguinda's marriage to the daughter of local nobility implies his incorporation and encompassment of the local chiefs and their ancestors. Thus, there can be no doubt about the potency of his ancestral connections: He has supernatural visions, and performs miraculous prayers.

Moreover, it is under Abu Bakr that the first *diwan* or law code based on *shari'a* (Islamic law) was issued uniting the coastal and interior peoples and the ruling sheiks and datus under the Sultanate.⁷ In fact, there is a wider intra-ethnic component to these genealogical stories in as much as not only are the Tausug posited as the original people of Sulu, but also the first and true Muslim converts and believers in Sulu: the Sama or Badjaw, seen as later immigrant arrivals who in tandem with the

gradual progression of Islam are hierarchically incorporated and encompassed within the polity, although they remain on the periphery of those considered true Muslim believers. In short Abu Bakr is posited as the unitary ancestral root from which a transformed potency flows. That is, "objectified" within the idiom of *barakat*, institutionalized within the structure of the Sultanate, and embodied in the person of the sultan, this genealogy of spiritual power enacted the separation of slave from commoner, commoner from noble and common noble from royal noble, Sama from Tausug (cf. Majul 1973: 318).⁸

This was, at least, the mythical-historical view. What was required in practise was not simply the delimitation and restriction of access to potency, but also the accumulation and distribution of potency or rather the signs thereof. Indeed, it was this need to continually accumulate and distribute signs of potency which was, I argue, the driving force behind the florescence of the Sulu polity as a regional trading entrepot in the 18th and 19th century, just as the emergence and florescence of the Tausug as a distinct and dominant ethnic group in the region was in large part based on their access to and control over trade (Bentley 1981: 132-135).⁹ Moreover, it is here that the reciprocal relation of economic and symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1977) or in Gilsenan's (1982:75-87) terms the "operations of grace (*barakat*)" are most fully expressed.¹⁰

4.3 The Florescence of the Sulu Polity

In discussing the rise and florescence of Sulu as a regional trading entrepot I am drawing heavily on James Warren's (1981), *The Sulu Zone 1768-1898*. It is not my intention to re-present his book, but to draw on his major points which relate to the issues above. Warren takes up J.C. van Leur's (1955, quoted in Warren 1981:xii) historiographical challenge to, "examine history from the other side - since we are still used to thinking of the European point of view as the right side of history". Specifically Warren challenges the two perspectives which have dominated the historical writings on Sulu, as well as other coastal polities, during this period. The first is the "decay theory", which basically argues that European monopolistic trade practices forced the coastal polities to turn to piracy. Concentration has thus been

placed on the European perspective, both as root cause of "piracy" and as police force attempting to suppress it (cf. Tarling 1963). The second approach, more specific to Sulu, is represented by Majul (1973) and Saleeby (1908/1963) who see raiding within the framework of "Moro wars" - an extension of the *jiḥād* against an expansionist and hostile Spanish colonial regime.

Warren's (1981) main argument is that slave raiding was crucial to the emergence of the Sulu polity as a dominant political and commercial centre. That is to say, raiding activity is not viewed as a negative response to European trade dominance, but a "positive" response to the new trade opportunities brought about by European involvement in the China trade. In short, the European need for exchangeable items with China, created a demand which Sulu readily responded to in order to increase and boost its own economy: Slave raiding, then, was primarily the result of the need for a larger labour force. It was the local response to new opportunities generated by a burgeoning global economy.

Warren's reading of the "Sulu Zone", provides the basic starting point, as well as much of the background material for my own interpretation of the Sulu polity during this period. However, I would argue that Saleeby's (1908/1963) and Majul's (1973) reading of Sulu history are also necessary in rendering an account of the rise, florescence and demise of the Sulu Sultanate, as well as in understanding the developments and transformations that occurred in the polity during the latter part of the 19th and through the 20th century as a result of colonial intrusion.

Saleeby (1963), in his, *History of Sulu*, presents with his account of the establishment of the Sultanate and the rule of the first sultans, a description of the first Castilian expedition to Sulu under Capt. Esteban Rodriquez de Figueroa in 1587. Outlined by the then Spanish governor general Sande, the major aims of the expedition included the subjugation of the Sultanate to a vassal state, the exaction of tribute, retribution for their part in Brunei's defense, seizure of their armaments, control of the Sulu Trade, conversion to Christianity and the prohibition of Islam (Blair and Robertson 1900 vol IV: 174 cited in Saleeby 1963)

Figeroa's landing in Jolo and the largely unsuccessful siege of the town of Jolo, "marked the beginning of war between Sulu and Spain, which covered a period of three hundred years . . . (Saleeby 1963: 49)." The significance of these "Moro Wars" which began more or less only one hundred years after the establishment of the Sulu Sultanate had a crucial impact on shaping local identity and local politics. As Kiefer (1988:53) says,

This history of continuous warfare had a formative effect on religious development in the area. While Islam had probably begun to penetrate Sulu several hundred years before the Spanish arrived, much of the process of gradual Islamicization was played out against the background of this war. Faced with an ethnocentric and militant Christian missionary zeal to the north, the Tausug conception of Islam grew naturally to emphasize the militancy of the holy war, or *jihad*, against the non-believers.

The point to be made here is that sultans were commonly seen as and considered themselves to be "defenders of the faith" - as was often indicated in the sultan's names and titles.¹¹ Moreover, even whilst the sultan did not have undisputed or exclusive rights to wage external war or launch reprisal raids, up until the end of the 19th century it was expected that the sultan would and could organize and pursue both the defense as well as the expansion of the *dar-ul-Islam*, the world of Islam (Majul 1973: 355; Kiefer 1972a: 53). Thus, I would argue that there is a close relationship between on the one hand the "moro wars", and the aggressively expansive Sulu polity of the 18th and 19th century.

Trade has always been important to Sulu, and the historical evidence suggests Chinese trading contact with local datus and rajas from the 13th century onwards. Sulu also had trading contacts with the Buginese on a regular basis both from Sulawesi and Borneo. It was during the 18th and 19th centuries, however, that the Sulu trade really blossomed. Apart from the continued Chinese and Buginese trade, the Sultanate conducted trade with the major European chartered companies, private American, English, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese "country traders" from Bengal, Singapore, Borneo, China, Manila and Mexico, as well as with the Spanish authorities in Manila.

The importance of trade for island and coastal states in Southeast Asia, such as the Sulu Sultanate, cannot be underestimated (cf. Reid 1993). One of the major historical criticisms of Geertz's (1980) *Negara*, for instance, is his failure to take full account of the political, and I would add symbolic, importance of trade. As Nordholt (1981:479) says:

Balinese lords have always had an interest in trade. They were the ones to strike out in new directions during the 19th century and they needed foreign trade not only as a source of tribute for their theatre, but also because it formed one of the very substantial elements of their political power.

In Sulu, one of the rights of the sultan was to control the market and set duty charges. In the 18th and 19th century the economic implications of this were tremendous, for each vessel, be it Amoy junk, country trader or company schooner, was subject to a duty at times as high as 50% of the cargo value. This duty was arbitrarily set either by the sultan or in consultation with other datus in the *Rumah Bicara*, the sultan's council (Warren 1981:58). Further, the sultan and/or datus often insisted on the right to purchase on credit, and then subsequently charge inflationary amounts for their goods in return. Thus, the amount of economic "capital" was enormous. It is important to highlight, however, the significance of the symbolic "capital" entailed by the control of markets.

The fact that markets were full and flowing with goods, as is evidenced by the amount and quantity of imported goods was a statement about the *barakat* of the sultan. Moreover, I would argue, the goods themselves were sign and signifier of potency not only with respect to the sultan, but for the average consumer as well. The two most ubiquitous imported items were Chinese ceramics and various cloth, including silk, satin, muslin and chintz as well as coarse cotton. In terms of the former, there were local Sama ceramic manufacturers which produced a range of earthenware, which in some cases was even traded to the Spanish (Spoehr 1972). Thus, Chinese ceramics were not of strictly utilitarian value. Although undoubtedly prestige goods, the sheer amount of imported wares, however, militates against an interpretation of them simply as a form of "ostentatious consumption" which was restricted to the aristocracy or men of means (*orangkaya*). In the same way, although

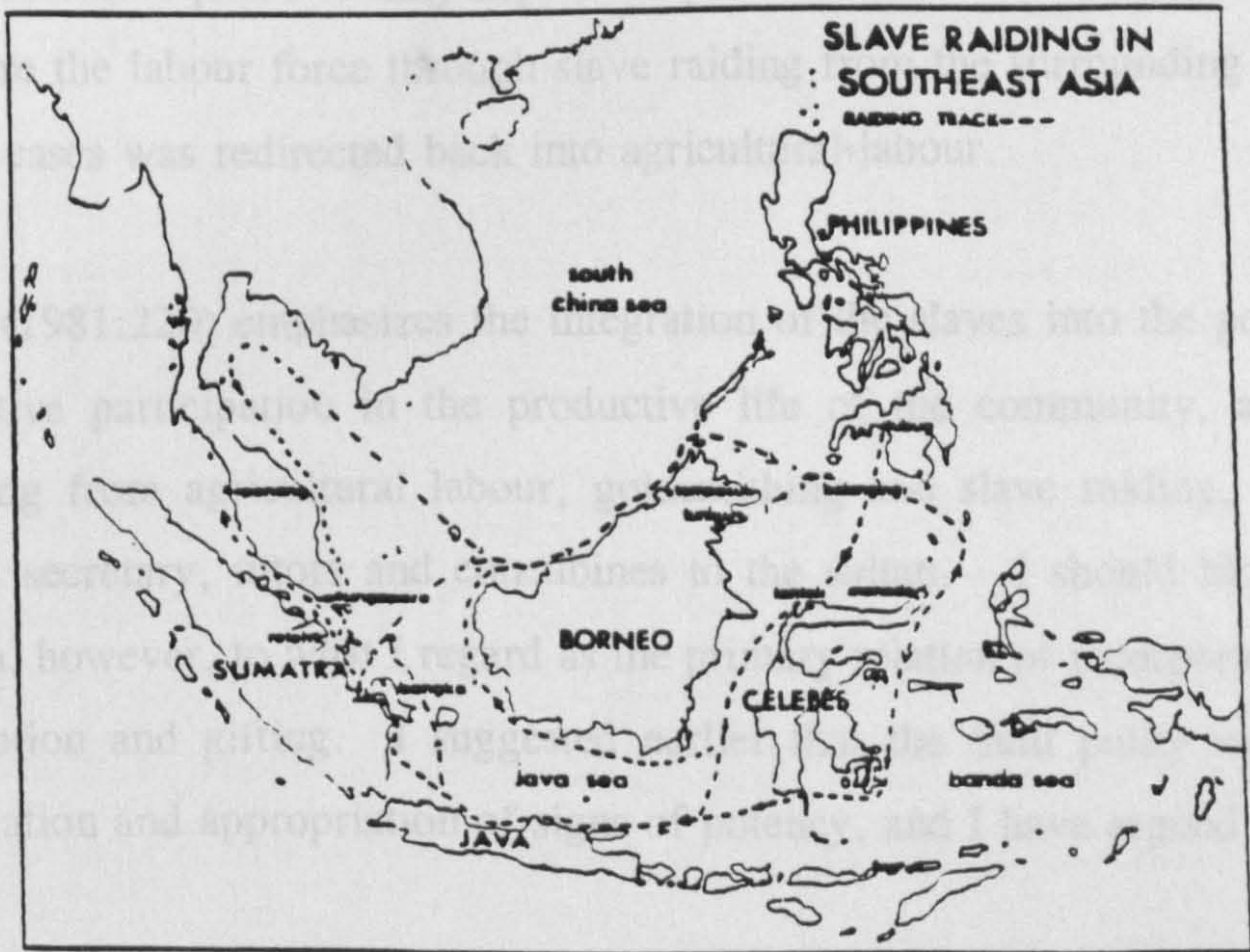
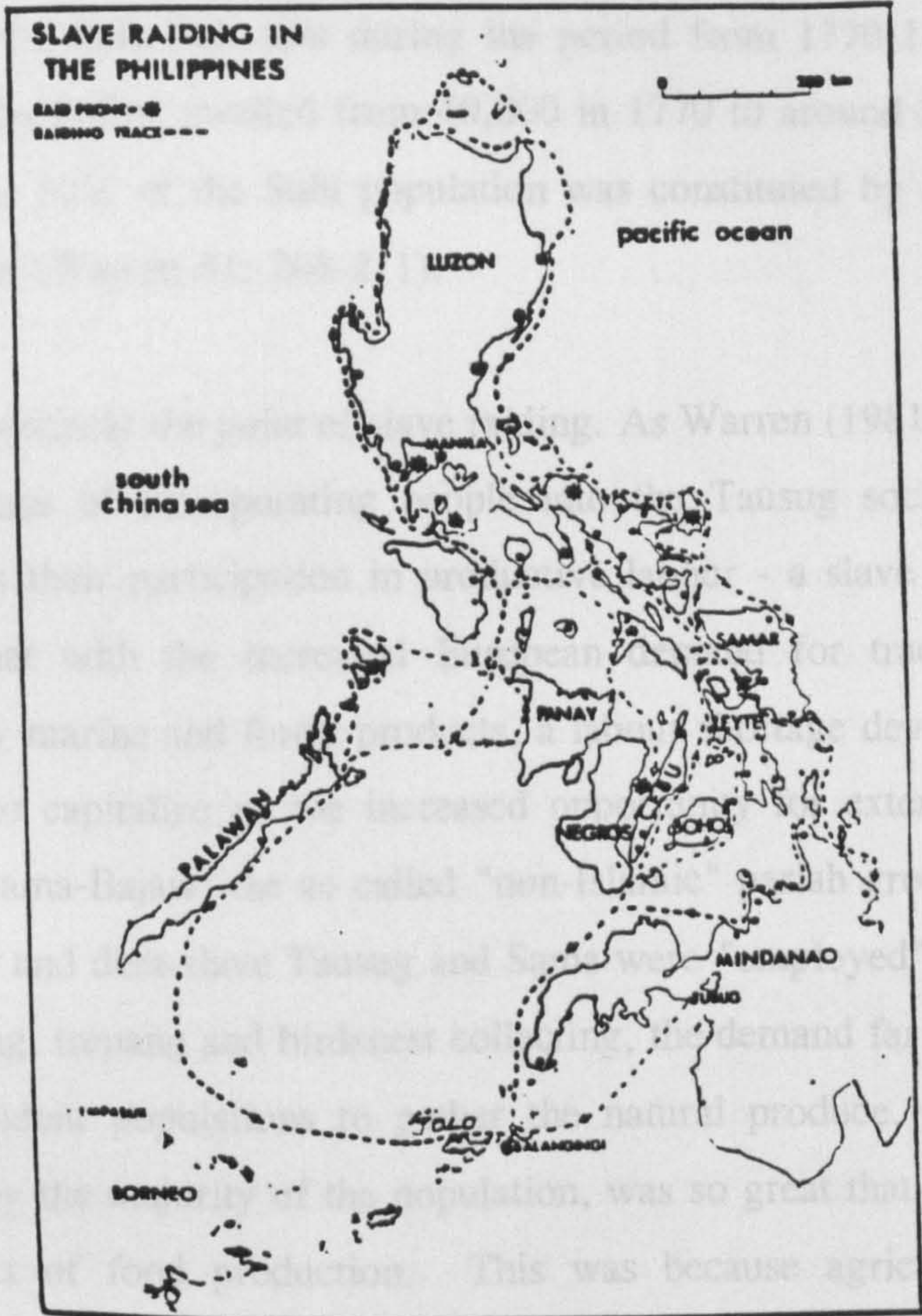
there were sumptuary laws which restricted the wearing of certain colours of clothing to the royalty (Bruno 1973:127), the use of fine cloth did not seem to be the exclusive domain of the nobility, and travellers' accounts in Sulu mention the attachment of all classes of society to finery (Warren 1981:246 and see below).

In Sulawesi the nobility who are said to have white (potent) blood are said to shed potency which may be attached to material objects such as a silk sarongs, etc. which are called *mana*' (inherited potent items), and often become talismans for the common people (Errington 1989:123). In a similar manner, it might be said, that clothing, like porcelain or anything else in the sultan's marketplace, were indexical signs of the sultan's potency. Having passed through the sultan's hands, moreover, they were pervaded with his effectiveness, so that the consumption of these "luxury goods", which included British glass and bronzeware, Spanish tobacco and wine, and Indian opium, signified participation in his potency. More importantly, perhaps, participation signified incorporation, a point which is most clearly seen with regards to slaves and slave raiding.

Slave raiding was carried out by the Iranun (Ilanun) and Balangingi' Sama, who were in a clientage relationship with the sultan and other Tausug datus, who provided the Iranun and Balangingi' raiders with the necessary outfit for slave raiding, i.e. *prahu* and munitions, in exchange for a certain number of slaves. Slaves would be traded by the raiders for rice, especially important for the Balangingi' Sama who resided on the largely infertile coral island of Balangingi'. As I note below, there was already a shortage of rice in Sulu, so that control over the redistribution of rice was a major form of economic power exercised by the sultan over the raiders. Further, although the raiding communities retained a measure of autonomy, especially the Iranun on the periphery of the Sulu Zone, they were tied to the sultan and other datus who controlled the munitions trade.

As Figures 4.1 shows, the raiding routes encompassed a vast geographical area, which necessitated satellite communities such as Reteh on Sumatra (see Reid 1983 for a overview of slavery in Southeast Asia), and while most of the captives were from

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 Slave raiding routes in the Philippines and in island Southeast Asia.



the Visayan Islands in the Philippines, captives from all over Southeast Asia were to be found in Sulu. Warren estimates that between 200,000-300,000 slaves were moved to the Sulu Sultanate during the period from 1770-1870. Thus, Jolo, the centre of the polity, swelled from 40,000 in 1770 to around 200,000 by 1814. By 1850, some 50% of the Sulu population was constituted by captives and captives' descendants (Warren 81: 208-211).

This was precisely the point of slave raiding. As Warren (1981:215) puts it, "Slavery was a means of incorporating people into the Tausug social system". Warren emphasizes their participation in productive labour - a slave mode of production - arguing that with the increased European demand for trade items with China, specifically marine and forest products, a labour shortage developed in the polity as it sought to capitalize on the increased opportunity for external trade. While the nomadic Sama-Bajaw, the so called "non-Islamic" pariah group of Sulu, as well as commoner and debt-slave Tausug and Sama were "employed" by the sultan/datus in pearl diving, trepang and birdsnest collecting, the demand far outweighed the ability of the resident populations to gather the natural produce. The response to the demand, by the majority of the population, was so great that it led in some cases to the neglect of food production. This was because agricultural activities often conflicted with trade and procurement, as the sowing of rice in April coincided with the arrival of trading vessels when demand was at its highest. Despite this, additional labour was still required to fully exploit the potential of trade. The answer, then, was to procure the labour force through slave raiding from the surrounding area, which in some cases was redirected back into agricultural labour.

Warren (1981:220) emphasizes the integration of the slaves into the polity through their active participation in the productive life of the community, and included everything from agricultural labour, goldsmithing and slave raiding, to acting as personal secretary, tutors and concubines to the sultan. I should like to redirect attention, however, to what I regard as the primary relation of incorporation, namely consumption and gifting. I suggested earlier that the Sulu polity was about the accumulation and appropriation of signs of potency, and I have argued that material

goods were a primary sign/signifier of potency. The other major item of consumption, however, in the sultan's market place, which was almost as ubiquitous as Chinese ceramics and fancy cloth, was slaves. To explain slave raiding and the significance of slaves as simply the appropriation and dissemination of indexical signs of potency, however, is clearly as unsatisfactory as to say that slaves were primarily required to man the *prahu* and labour in the rice fields.

Such an explanation points in the right direction for ultimately the only meaningful sign of potency is persons. That is to say, the significance of slave raiding was the slaves themselves, since it was only in and through relationships with them that the datus' and sultan's power was realized or became meaningfully potent. Thus, it is not simply that the sultan and datus defined their power by the number of slaves they "possessed", but rather that slaves defined the significance, as they determined - largely through their productive labour - the limits and extent, of the sultan's and datus' power.

But while slaves were constitutive of the datu's position, they were similarly re-constituted as persons within a new field of signification through their relationship with the datu. It is these relations which must now be examined. There can be no doubt about the physical brutality with which slaves were treated during the initial stages of captivity:

At the outset of their passage to the Sulu archipelago, captives were subject to harsh treatment. When raiders plundered and sunk a *prahu* or seized people from the shore, the captured persons were separated from one another and taken aboard different vessels. . . Once on board, they were stripped naked, a rattan ring was put around their necks, and some were tied down to the side of the *prahu*. Others were forced to lie immobile on the bottom of the *prahu* with their hands and feet bound with sharp rattan (Warren 81: 240).

The raiders clearly used this stage, which lasted from several weeks to several months, to weaken and cove the captives into submission and thus prevent escape. Captives emerged from this brutal "liminality" only upon arrival in Sulu and it was at this point that physical control was increasingly slackened. Once the captives were with their new masters in Jolo, they had virtual freedom of movement. Because of

this, and the proximity of the Spanish presidio at Zamboanga, escape from Jolo was relatively easy. Although one to two hundred escaped annually, it was more common among the *los nuevos*, the newly enslaved. For example, "Out of a total of 50 slaves who escaped to the Spanish fleet visiting Jolo in 1836, 38 had been in captivity less than six years; 7 for between six and eight years; and the remainder for more than a decade."

The lessening of physical constraint also coincided with changes in their "economic" positioning. Here I am drawing on Kopytoff's (1986) useful notion of the changing phases which marks a slave's socio-biography from commodity to non-commodity and ultimately I would argue in Sulu to their incorporation through and within a gift relation. As noted above, slaves were currency as well as chattel, so that they might be exchanged while still on the voyage to Sulu for provisions such as rice. Those captives which were even more unfortunate, especially the weak and infirm, were used as currency to barter with peoples on the periphery, such as the *Segai-i* who would take captives, to be used in human sacrifice, in exchange for birds nest, etc. The further one moved into the Sulu Zone, however, the less likely one was to be exchanged, as the slave moved in effect from being exchangeable currency to protected property.

Several important points, however, must be made in this regard. The first, is to indicate the parameters within which property relations were understood and realized. Whilst in regards to land for instance, distinctions are drawn by the Tausug between ultimate titular ownership (*tagmustahak/tagdapuh*) and rights of usufruct (*pagsuku'*). What both signify are an underlying notion of guardianship, which in practise blurs the boundaries between them. This is seen clearly for instance with regards to *pusaka'* (heirlooms or inheritance). Traditionally, apart from land, gold was one of the most common forms of inheritance given to women, so that gold is still commonly referred to as *suku' babai* - a woman's portion. What emerges with regards to *pusaka'*, however, is that women whilst in practical terms are considered to have day to day ownership and control over the gold, they are ultimately only guardians over what is seen as belonging to one's ancestors. The point is, as Kiefer

(1972b:23) notes, "When a Tausug says that he owns something, he is mainly stressing that he will use his own personal power to protect it against transgression; one owns something if one is ultimately responsible for its protection".

Secondly, whilst the Sulu code defined the *banyaga* as having no legal personality and defined the *banyaga* as possessions which could be, "transferred, bought or sold" at will, the actual life situation, as Warren (1981:217) puts it,

. . .contradicted their legal status as a group. Banyaga were permitted to purchase their freedom and assume a new status and ethnicity; the children of a female banyaga and a freeman inherited the status of their father; some banyaga could bear arms; any slave could own property which reverted to his master at death."

Moreover, whilst the threat of sale especially to the *Segai-i* was used by some masters to threaten their slaves, masters would be unlikely to sell or exchange one of their slave-followers, unless it was requested by the slave themselves. Indeed, slaves could and apparently did request their masters to sell them to another if their situation was less than favourable, which Warren suggests was seen as preferable to risking their desertion.

Thus, whilst slaves might have been defined as non-persons, their significance was not as such pre-determined. Rather it could become negotiated, as it was largely constituted, through the reciprocal relations which Rafael (1988) and Scott (1982) following the Tagalog *utang na loob* describe as indebtedness, but which I have, following the Tausug, termed *remembrancing*. An important instance of this is the gift of clothing which together with the giving of a new name marked the initial stages of a slaves relationship with his/her new master, as seen for instance in the account given by one captive:

Through the influence of this women I was bought the same day by her husband Unkud for a *lilla'*, the weight of one *picul* (*lilla'* and *picul* were units of measure for rice). Immediately I received from my new master a pair of trousers, a Chinese baju, a sarong and a handkerchief (Warren 1981: 246).

The dress of the *banyaga* varied according to their location within the social

geography, and was largely related to their master's status. Thus, while the poorest agricultural labourers may have worn grass skirts, others were well clothed and carried fine *kris*. The majority had at least a Chinese jacket or cotton sarong. Further up and further in, the consumption of imported cloth blurred status categories, as the following remarks suggests:

As a head dress, most of the Sulo men prefer the Publicat red handkerchief; a few only the fine Javanese handkerchief...the middling classes and slaves are however partial to handkerchiefs of the most lively and shewy colours of the French and American patterns ... they also wear the China baju , full sleeves without buttons, either of rich gauzes, silk and sattens of all colours from China, or Europe and coast Chintzes of the largest and liveliest patterns; and some wear Manilla grass cloth. The lowest slave, in this respect, vies with the datu in splendour of apparel (cited in Warren 1981:246).

I have already indicated the importance of cloth and clothing in the sultans marketplace, and here I should like to further highlight its role in the relation between master and slave. Cohn (1989: 313, cf. Bayly 1986) notes with regard to the gift of cloth in 16th century India, for instance, that "the donor includes the recipient within his own person through the medium of the wardrobe." This same understanding is expressed by the notion of the *pesalinan*, as recorded in the *Sejarah Melayu*, in which the *Raja* takes his clothing and gives it to his vassals thereby incorporating the person within his domain (Brown 1952:54-59; cf. also Gittinger 1979:27n.ff). The point is that to receive and be clothed in the sultan's or datu's clothing was both a sign of deference and a sign of encompassment. Clothing was thus indicative, as it was constitutive of, the relationship through which each - the slave and sultan - were reciprocally if differentially realized, at once symbols of participation and agents of incorporation into the body politic, effectively extending the bounds of the sultan's power.

In an ironic twist, however, the gift and appropriation of slaves, as well as participation in slaving, by slaves marks their full incorporation. It is at this point, moreover, that the cyclicity of power and domination within this cultural economy is best observed. Warren (1981:253) expresses this relation as follows:

It is important to emphasize again the inextricable role of slave production in the evolution of this system. The relationship between trade and slavery in Sulu was reciprocal. Power depended on control of persons (slaves and retainers), which in turn depended on disposable wealth to maintain and attract them. Escalating competition for wealth further fuelled the demand for manpower (more slaves and retainers).

Slave raiding and trade represent the appropriation of signs of potency. The mere accumulation or consumption of slaves or cloth, however, signified nothing apart from the processes through which they received their relationally determinate signification. Rendered meaningfully potent, they became violently active symbols which, in the production and consumption of the sultan's *barakat*, participated in their own incorporation - or we might say ingestion - the reciprocal relation fully demonstrated by the slave who, occupying what might be regarded as the central zone of symbolic domination, returns full circle to the periphery in an act of violence.

The Sulu polity flourished as it had emerged, in the form of empowerment through the accumulation and appropriation, of, on the one hand, religious ideas and, on the other, material goods and people, which effectively reproduced and extended the social relations in which appropriation occurred. Moreover, the florescence of the Sulu polity represented an expansion of the *dar-ul-Islam*, for whilst among first generation slaves from the Visayas there are instances both of slaves who chose to convert to Islam as well as slaves who remained Catholic, the overwhelming majority of second and later generations considered themselves to be "Islam".

However, whilst the appropriation of Islam may be clearly seen as an attempt to substantivize potency and fix the relations of signification, it was only partially successful in this regard. On the one hand, Islamic ideology as expressed in the Sultanate, amongst other things, differentially defined persons in terms of their place within the divine order and blessing embodied by the sultan. Yet as I have argued above it was only in and through the play of reciprocal relations that signification was realized. As Majul (1973:320) notes,

The relations of the sultan to his ministers, his relations to the religious functionaries in his realm, his duties, rights, and powers, the coronation rites in all its details, and even the manner of approaching or speaking to him,

were all prescribed by a *tartib*. To violate the *tartib* constituted a *lese majeste* and if it did not invite retaliation from the sultan himself it was believed to bring about bad luck or misfortune to the transgressor. However, the *tartib* was prescriptive; sometimes there were persons powerful enough to disobey the sultan with impunity. In brief, adherence to the *tartib* was a function of the personal qualities of the sultan, the resources he had at hand, and the general support he had among the panglimas, *datus* and people. It is therefore important to distinguish the claims of the sultans, the claims of the *datus* and the people, and the resolution of conflicting claims in different epochs in Sulu's varied history. Historical data demonstrate that the formal structure of the sultan's government was often not operative in Sulu society.

The point is that Islam did not determine local social relations. Rather it was the idiom within which persons understood themselves and within which they engaged others in the reciprocal processes of signification, so that for instance, *sarraka* - whose significance I have noted with regards both to *ilmu*' and remembrance celebrations - became a primary idiom within which a range of reciprocal material exchanges, including the giving of tribute to the sultan, took place (cf. Kiefer 1972a:48).

This in itself was perhaps the primary sign of submission and encompassment. However, it is necessary, in Rafael's (1988) terms to look at the way in which submission was translated. The word *tartib* (cf. quote from Majul above) which designated prescriptive statements concerning relations of state, such as the entitlement of persons to be called *datu*, etc., is interesting in this regard. As Majul (1973:370) notes in his glossary, *tartib* is the Arabic word for order, arrangement or sequence. He goes on to note that the Arabic word *martabah* derived from the same trilateral root *rtb*, means the rank or grade which a person or element possesses regarding an order. Yet, the term *martabat* (also *maratabat*), as I have noted in the previous chapter, signals not a predetermined rank or grade, but rather the capacity for and an awareness of oneself as a continually evolving set of relations. It is an assertion of the fact that *tartib* is, as Majul puts it, a function and not a determinant of the social relations of which it is a product. Thus, the history of the Sulu polity emerges as continual process through which persons negotiated their place within, if ultimately under, the Sultanate.

4.4 The Dissolution of the Sulu Sultanate

Before the campaign of 1876 the sultan ruled with a strong hand, lived in state, was prosperous and had considerable wealth. The principle datus lived at Jolo, and the Sulu forces were united (Saleeby 1963:147)

Whilst Saleeby's description of Jolo in the years prior to 1876 are somewhat overdrawn, he was right in as much as whilst there had been previous sieges, brief occupations and prior declarations of Spanish sovereignty, these were part of the ebb and flow of what was up until then an independent and generally expansive polity. The Spanish occupation of Jolo in 1876 and the events that followed under the overlordship of the Governor Arolas, however, sounded what was to be the death knell of the Sulu polity. Its demise was overseen and administered by the US government, beginning with their occupation of Sulu in 1898.

To a large extent, however, the dissolution of the Sultanate was not simply the result of Spanish and American action, but was, to use a Marxist phrase (Althusser 1969:106-13), structurally and historically over-determined. It was caught in the nexus both of the internal tensions of, as I have argued, an incorporative polity which necessitated continual expansion, and at the same time in conflict and competition amongst the European powers, so that as Warren (1981:124; cf also Majul 73:283) notes: "the fate of the Sultanate and its relationship to the Philippine archipelago was fixed in the modern world system dominated by Western imperial interests."

I begin my account of the unravelling of the Sulu polity with Saleeby whose *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion* (1905), *The Moro Problem* (1913) and his seminal *History of Sulu* (1908) written during the early years of the American occupation, were (as have most sympathetic accounts since then been) an apologetic for an autonomous government in Sulu. While *The Moro Problem* was his most programmatic statement, all of his writings can be viewed as a critique of the abrogation of the Bates Agreement (1889), which had assured autonomy for the Sulu polity as a protectorate of the United States, and its replacement with a policy of direct military rule.

In particular what Americans cited as a basis for this action was what they regarded as the lack of centralized government, the incessant feuding and violence, what they perceived to be the lack of a legal system and the arbitrary rule of the *datus* and sultan over their people, in which they exacted exorbitant fines which often resulted in enslavement (Kiefer 1972a; Gowing 1983:44-51). Saleeby challenged this view of the Sulu polity by demonstrating in his, *Studies in Moro History and Law*, that there was indeed an operative legal system, whilst in the *History of Sulu*, Saleeby argued that the social practises found at the time of the American occupation were not due to any inherent flaw or tendency in the social character or cultural make up of the Moros, as many of his contemporary American military administrators argued, but the specific historical product of Spanish hostility.

The occupation of Jolo in 1877 by Spain and the treaty of 1878, amongst other things, had removed from the sultan the right to collect duty from the port in Jolo and all other ports which were under the Spanish governor, and it had increased the pressure on the sultan to stop slave raiding. Thus the sultan and ruling *datus* were deprived of what had been up until that time a major source of income and more importantly, as I have argued, the nodal point in the conversions between and control over symbolic and economic capital.

However, it is also important to note the transformations in the Sulu economy which had begun prior to this. The Spanish had, through their effective blockade of Sulu in the early 1870's, already reduced Tausug participation in regional trade, which increasingly fell under the control of a burgeoning Chinese population. More importantly, slave raiding had already been greatly reduced both by the destruction of Balangingi' Island in 1848 and the forced exile of the Balangingi' to Luzon, but also by the introduction of steamships or *caneneros* (Warren 1981: 104-125; Tan 1989:57-61).

Whilst sporadic raiding did continue until the turn of the century and whilst the sultan and *datu's* continued to hold slaves (Kiefer 1972a:30; Warren 1981: 182-197, 216) they increasingly relied not on *banyaga* - that is slaves captured through raiding, but

on debt-slaves (*kiyapangdihilan*, literally those who have been given) from amongst their own followers, which was directly tied to what appeared to be a spiralling increase in the fines levied by the datu and sultan in their administration of the law. Thus, by the time the Spanish occupied Jolo, slave raiding was already in marked decline and it was no longer the central slave trading market. Significantly following the treaty of 1876, the sultan, Jamal ul-Azam, moved his residence from Jolo to Maimbung and was followed by a general exodus of datos from the town to their own areas from where they could exact trade duties and exert their own influence over local trade.

This was the background to the growing dissension and increasing factionalism within the Sultanate, which coalesced around Sultan Badarudin's death in 1884 when two closely opposed factions of datos simultaneously declared their sultan. Significantly the crisis over the succession was partly fuelled by the emergence of two non-royal datos, Datu Julkairnayn and Datu Kalbi, who as Majul (1973:326) argues, reasserted the claims of the traditional, i.e. pre-Sultanate (though not conceived as pre-Islamic), datu against the sultan.¹²

The important point for Saleeby (1968:147) was that on the eve of the American occupation of Jolo as a result of the invasion and occupation of Sulu, the subsequent withdrawal of the sultan and dispersion of datos, the internal divisions and conflict over the secession - exacerbated by the Spanish eager to exact complete submission - the Sulu polity had already been reduced to "small, insignificant and disunited entities." The result was that,

Each datu began to feel more or less independent of the other, their forces were disunited, and each chief relied solely upon his own fortifications and following. United action was ignored or became impracticable. Soon the subordinate chiefs began to feel their importance, gradually asserted their rights, and assumed greater dignity and power in proportion to their property and the following they could command.

I would argue following Saleeby that those accounts which characterize the Sulu polity as torn by "constant internecine strife" (Kiefer 1972a:55) have neglected this point. This is neither to say that prior to this the polity did not experience centrifugal

tension and internal conflict, nor that prior to this the Sultanate functioned along the lines of a modern state bureaucracy as it clearly did not. Rather it is simply to suggest that the state of play which emerged and has developed over the last century is rooted in the transformations that occurred during the latter half of the 19th century.

One of the things that previous anthropologists have continually commented on and indeed have built much of their understanding of local politics around is the extent to which "headmen" and their local followings (whether in Kagayan Sulu, Casino 1976, or in rural Jolo, Kiefer 1972b) are pivotal to the exercise power. This "factional" analysis of politics is typical of much of the structural-functionalist analysis of Philippine social and political life (for classic statements see Lande [1965] and Hollensteiner 1972;1963). Kiefer's (1972b) work in particular provided a dynamic account of the dyadic nature of social action especially with regards to alliances fostered and built around the seemingly incessant violent feuds in Sulu.

Whilst accurate in its own terms, Kiefer's (1972b) characterization of alliance formation centred around violent activity amongst rural Tausug must be properly historicized. In particular, the collapse of and withdrawal of the sultan from the central market place (*tiangi'*) signalled an end to the expansive and increasingly hierarchical polity and instead gave rise to the emergence of an internally fractious polity which increasingly tended towards what Kiefer (1972b) describes as a "status conscious" egalitarianism, a primary characteristic of which was violent feuding. To be precise I would argue that violent feuding is not (as Kiefer 1972b and Moore 1981 suggest) the Tausug way of life, but rather that with the dissolution of the Sultanate, increasingly became valorized as a means of eliciting signs of deference, and of manifesting potency.

Significantly another transformation occurred in the late 19th century related to this. Coinciding with the divisions taking place within the Sultanate, and the sultan's retreat into the hinterlands, resistance to the Spanish which had previously been organized and made possible by the Sultanate gave way to and became increasingly

individualized in what Kiefer calls the institution of the personal *jihad* or *parrang sabbil*, a ritual form of suicide. As Kiefer (1988:53; cf also Ewing 1955), whose description I am following here, notes,

Group resistance against the Spanish prior to the middle of the 19th century was relatively well-organized through the institutions of the Sultanate. But with the Spanish conquest of the town of Jolo in 1876, responsibility for the *jihad* came increasingly to be a concern of the individual and local community, rather than the state.

Borrowed from Malay, the terms *parrang sabbil* might be translated as, "holy war", but Kiefer (1988) suggests that in Sulu, at least, it meant "one who dies or is killed in the path of God". Kiefer suggests that there were two basic forms and understandings of the *sabbil*, and several periods in its development. The occupation of Jolo in 1876 marked the emergence of the formal *parrang sabbil* or *juramentado*, as it was called by the Spanish. This involved a single man or group of men who would enter an occupied town and dispatch as many non-Muslims as possible before being killed themselves. This continued throughout the Spanish and into the American period and included both individual and group *juramentado*.

During the Filipino period which continues up until present a second less ritualized understanding of *sabbil* emerges in which all persons who are innocently killed in battle with non-Muslims are automatically considered *sabbil*, whether or not they had gone through formal ritual preparations. Here it is important to note that such attacks were carried out against those who were seen as attacking Islam or the Tausug, which had largely become synonymous, at least in Sulu. Personal *jihad* was a defense of the *dar ul-Islam*, and more particularly a Muslim identity.

Later in the thesis I shall return to a consideration of the *parrang sabbil* as it crucial I would argue to the valorization of especially male identities. Here I would suggest conjecturally, that the rise of the individualized *jihad*, which was directly tied to the dissolution of the Sultanate, may have coincided with the increasing importance of "*ilmu*" as the primary idiom within which potency was understood and addressed.

Note for instance that one of the overriding emphasis of *ilmu*' and associated amulets

and talismans is with invulnerability as well as with courage and bravery. This sensibility of being invulnerable is both general, in as much as it is seen as defining characteristic of Muslimness, but it is also highly personal and is operative not just in situations where one is defending Islam, as such, but also in pursuit of violent feuds. Indeed, ability in battle and coming out unscathed is interpreted either in terms of the person possessing very powerful *ilmu*' or in terms of a person being *ilmu'an* (efficacious).

Thus, one could argue that the dissolution of the sultan, also meant a dismantling of *barakat*. Whereas previously *barakat* (spiritual power or blessing) had flowed through the line of sultans and other nobility - substantivized through and only to the extent that they could appropriate and elicit signs of potency - it now seemingly flows through a myriad of channels, although in what is commonly thought to be a much diluted form, for the *ilmu*' of even the most revered and respected guru is no match for the *barakat* of the sultan and datus of old. It is only the *kamaasan* (forbears) and the sultans of old who are said to be *mabarakat* (possessing or filled up with spiritual blessing), and only rarely did I hear of anyone, including the current sultan(s), referred to as such.

4.5 Continuity and Contradiction: Sulu in The 20th Century

The Americans, who took over the Spanish colonial legacy in the Philippines, completed what Spain had previously begun. The Bates Treaty (1898), which initially provided for a measure of self-rule, was abrogated by the Americans in 1903 and in its place a policy of direct rule through the political-military governorship was established for the "Moro Provinces" which lasted until 1913.¹³ The underlying basis for this decision is what has come to be called the *American Mandate*. Sulu, unlike other parts of Muslim Mindanao, did not comprise an economic interest for the United States and only presented a political priority to the extent that its subjugation was seen as being necessary to securing a comprehensive *pax americana* as well as a necessary step towards the possible integration and completion of a Philippine State under American tutelage. Even more so than the rest of the Philippines, Sulu was viewed primarily as a social problem, and the goal of the mandate was in President

McKinley's words to, "develop, civilize, educate or train the Moros in the science of (democratic) self government" (Gowing 1983:319).

As I have already noted (see section 2.3 above), this was to be accomplished through the establishment of educational and other civic institutions. However, policies were also implemented to forcibly restructure the Sulu polity and incorporate Sulu within the Philippine state. These included the exaction of a *cedula* (registration tax), the implementation of provincial custom duties, the abolishment of slavery, and the establishment of a system of ward courts, which repudiated the *agama* law system administered by the sultan, datus and other recognized headmen (*panglima*) in favour of a largely military administrated court system, all of which was specifically intended to remove both the symbolic and economic basis of the sultan and other datu's power (Gowing 1983: 117-133).¹⁴ In short, the Sultanate became increasingly marginal to and marginalized by the colonial state bureaucracy, and in 1915 Sultan Jamal ul-Kiram II formally abdicated.

At the same time, American institutions, whilst effecting the dissolution of the traditional Sulu polity, also opened up a new field of play not only for the aristocracy but for an emergent non-aristocratic town elite. Although titled persons retained much of their status as datus and continued to exert influence in their local strongholds in the hinterlands (*gimba*), the real power-elite which emerged in the early part of the century were those (including formerly titled persons) who were able to situate themselves both as "gate-keepers" (Beckett 1982) for state funds and "mediators" between the colonial state bureaucracy and traditional headman politics (Kiefer 1972b:139).¹⁵ Not surprisingly, it is these same persons who were in the best vantage point from which to accumulate the symbolic capital of the "*ilmu' milikan*" - which as I have suggested in Chapter 1 is embodied simultaneously in beauty and *istyle* (style), as well as in english, education and the discourses of "democratization" and professionalization. In other words, the implementation of the American mandate like the "introduction" of Islam in the 14th and 15th century not only signalled a new universe of indexical signs of potency in the form of material objects, language, titles, etc., but also signalled a new system of discriminatory signs or "criteria" in Wilk's

(1995) terms through which persons attempted to fix themselves and others in the relations of signification.

This is not to say, however, that the transformation was singular or complete. As I have outlined above (4.2) Islam had, over the course of several hundred years become the primary idiom within which persons understood and asserted their significance within the universe. The dissolution of the Sultanate, moreover, which began under the continuous onslaught of the Spanish in the mid - to late 19th century, did not in any way effect a similar diminishment of an Islamic identity. Rather, whereas previously persons were incorporated into Islam largely through their participation in the sultan's *barakat*, as the Sultanate became ineffectual, persons became individually tied to as they increasingly became responsible for the defense of the *dar-ul-Islam*. This shift marked a new phase in the crystallization of an individualized Muslim identity within which the individual participated directly through martyrdom in the divine order and blessing (Kiefer 1988:62-67).

This is precisely the place at which a contradiction arose since the Americans were, like the Spanish before them, clearly seen to represent a certain order of relations not just distinct from but antagonistic to this identity. Not surprisingly the American colonial regime met with the some of the fiercest (if least united) resistance from the Muslim Tausug and Sama. Amongst the measures which met with the strongest opposition were the attempted implementation of the *cedula*, the registration tax which required all adult males between the ages of 18 and 55 to pay 1 peso per year. The payment of the *cedula* (considered the symbolic equivalent of giving *sarraka* to the sultan as a sign of submission) was seen by many as being tantamount to conversion. Resistance to the *cedula* tax led to the infamous battle of Bud Dahu in 1906 when at least 600 men, women and children died in a mass form of *parrang sabbil* or defensive ritual suicide (Gowing 1983:160-163), and Kiefer (1988) reports that as late as the mid 1960's certain older persons refused to walk along roads built through the money raised by such tax for fear of being transformed into a Christian Filipino.

The point is that the appropriation of the *ilmu' milikan* was never simply a question

of acquiring the vitality, efficaciousness or *mana* of the Americans, but was also a question of identity. Eventually disarmed by the American military, local persons appear to have constructed a theoretical framework which allowed them to retain their Muslim identity whilst freely participating in the American order of things. Kiefer (1988:65) describes this framework as follows:

To the question, "Why does God permit these infidels to conquer us", the answer they gave was that sometime in the past God gave both the Tausug and The Americans a choice whether they wanted paradise on this earth or paradise in the afterworld. The Americans naturally chose paradise in this world, and the Tausug paradise in the afterworld. This was the basis of a perfect working misunderstanding, although the Filipinos were left in limbo.

In what was clearly an extension of this reasoning, I was told on several occasions that the differences between the Tausug and the Americans could be related to differences between the *ilmu'* (knowledge-power) of *Nabi Isa* (the Prophet Jesus) and the *ilmu'* (knowledge-power) of *Nabi Muhammad* (the prophet Muhammad). That is, *Nabi Isa* is seen as the *pangikutan* (forerunner of, a kind of ideal type) of the *milikan* (American) in as much as his power was said to be demonstrated in the world healing the sick, etc., whilst *Nabi Muhammad* is linked to the Tausug in as much as his power was concerned primarily with the proclamation of and struggle for true religion and whose rewards, as it were, lie in the afterworld.

This local theory marks the interpretive point of departure here for it is clear that there has been, and continues to be, an attempt to carve out a theoretical space for the appropriation of the *ilmu' milikan*. However, two important points remain to be made here. The first is that whilst I have focused on the notion of the *ilmu' milikan* (the knowledge-power of America), it is, as I have already suggested (see 1.3 above), no longer strictly speaking about America or Americans, but rather about a certain imaginary global other. The second point, which is of more immediate relevance to this chapter, is related to the specific political developments which occurred as a result of the end of the American and beginning of the largely Christian Filipino administration of Sulu in 1920.

As the process of Filipinization, that is, the replacement of American personnel with predominately Christian personnel, began in earnest (beginning around 1916), violent resistance, which had been relatively dormant for a seven year period, was again taken up, although it was increasingly directed towards Filipinos. To the local Muslim population, even amongst the more educated and cooperative bureaucratic elite, it signalled the clear intent of the Americans to, in their eyes, abandon them to the Christian Philippine State (Gowing 1983:327; Che Man 1990:53). Whilst the town elite signed petitions against such a move, in more rural areas there were renewed outbreaks of violent resistance (Tan 1977: 37-42).¹⁶

Similarly, for persons in Sulu, the primary significance of the 1934 Tydings-McDuffie Independence Act, which set out the terms for the eventual independence of the Philippine Islands (of which Sulu was now assumed to be an integral part) was that it demonstrated the seeming futility of their attempts to voice their concerns over what they understood to be forced cultural assimilation. The newly independent post-war government seemed to bear out the substance of their concerns. Eager to exploit the resources of Mindanao, the Philippine government encouraged the large-scale migration of Christian Filipinos into Mindanao, resulting in the displacement of local Muslim populations. Moreover, until 1956, Sulu was governed as a 'special province' by Manila based and appointed officials. Even when the province was fully integrated into the normal provincial electoral system there remained a high proportion of Christian Filipino personnel both in elected governmental positions, and perhaps even more significantly in a burgeoning civil service sector. Nor was this, as Arce (1983:29) suggests, simply the product of a lack of suitably qualified personnel, i.e. educated-professionals, to fill these jobs, but was rather the work of systematic discrimination (Thomas 1971: 269-276).

The second world war also had a crucial effect on shaping local politics in the latter half of this century. Local persons, supplied with arms by the American and Philippine Military, resisted the Japanese much as they had previously resisted the Spanish, Americans and Filipinos. However, one of the outcomes of the war was the rearming of vast numbers of persons in Sulu (Gowing 1979:183). Not only did this

have the effect of increasing the number and ramifications of internal feuding (Kiefer 1968c:21-28), but it also provided a basis for further armed resistance against the Philippine State. Thus, there was almost an immediate upsurge in violence against the state following the war, the most notable of the pre-martial law period being the Hadji Kamlun uprising which continued on and off from 1951 to 1955 (Gowing 1979:188; Tan 1977:114).

Coinciding with the growing unrest in Sulu and Mindanao, there was also a growth of a global Islamic consciousness, primarily amongst the educated towns-persons, with increased numbers of local elite making the *hadj*, increasing contacts with other Muslim countries, and the opening of *madaris* (*madrasha*) and other Islamic religious and civil organizations associated with learned scholars and teachers (*ustadz*) (Gowing 1979:183; Arce 1983:39). All of this combined with a general disaffection with the Philippine government and the heightened sense of ethnic-religious persecution following the Jabidah and Manili Massacres in 1968 and 1971 respectively, was the immediate backdrop to the emergence of the Muslim Independence Movement (MIM), and its more potent progeny, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and other armed separatist movements in the late 1960's and early 1970's.

Although there were many factors leading up to secessionist conflict, the outbreak of war in the Southern Philippines was precipitated by the imposition of martial law by Marcos in 1972 and the attempt to disarm the populace (Noble 1976). Supplied by arms from Libya and Sabah, Malaysia, the Bangsa Moro Army (the military wing of the MNLF) under Nur Misuari was able to sustain a costly (to both sides) military campaign against the Philippine military until 1976, with casualties estimated at around 50,000. In 1976, the Tripoli agreement was signed which was supposed to have brought about a genuinely autonomous government in the region, but President Marcos ensured that it remained so only on paper. The failure to implement the Tripoli agreement brought about a renewed spate of violence, although the separatist movement was by the late 1970's greatly weakened by internal dissension, the splintering into several fronts as well as by the fact that many of the MNLF executive were generally living in exile in various Middle-East states.

Following Marcos' forced departure in 1986, Cory Aquino began discussions aimed at resolving the protracted struggle between the MNLF and government forces. A cease-fire was declared in 1986 although talks again broke down with the MNLF in 1987. The Aquino government then pursued the negotiation and implementation of the provisions of the Tripoli agreement for an autonomous regional government with Muslim leaders outside of the MNLF. The end result was a plebiscite in 1989 in which four provinces- Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Maguindanao and Lanao del Sur - were incorporated into the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). Elections for the regional assembly were held in 1990, and the regional government has been officially in operation since 1991.

4.6 The Political Economy of Jolo, Sulu: A View of the Present Situation.

In Sulu, the conflict reached its height with the brief capture of the town of Jolo by the MNLF in February 1974. The town was subsequently recaptured following its almost total obliteration by the Philippine Navy, and large numbers of persons were forced to flee to Zamboanga City. An eight year period of direct and repressive rule followed under several Christian military governors, although the military was largely restricted to the immediate environs of the town. The events surrounding 1974 are, not surprisingly, an important marker for persons living in the town, and as I suggest in Chapter 10, it is the date from which persons commonly trace the perceived rise in the number of *gay/bantuts*.

However, by the early 1980's and with the official end of martial law and the re-establishment of a local (but presidentially appointed) civilian government and bureaucracy made up of nominally pro-government Muslim Tausug or MNLF "returnees", the population of the town had increased once again. This was mainly as a result of persons from the hinterlands (*gimba*) moving into the town both to escape the isolation brought about by the conflict and to see that their children received a good education. This trend continues, and in the final part of this chapter, I should like to briefly outline my reading of the political and economic situation in the town of Jolo as it was at the time of field work.¹⁷

Jolo's economy is, as it has been over the past 300-400 years, still largely based around it being the central market (*tiangi*) for all of Sulu. There is as yet, apart from construction and small craft production, no industry to speak of. Thus, the political and economic elite of the town (and of Sulu as a whole) remain those who, apart from control of local government finance, own, or exercise some control over, local trade and finance networks, market facilities and transportation, rather than (in most cases at least) direct ownership of agricultural land or other productive enterprises.

This includes, on the one hand, the buying, selling and transport of cash crops (mainly copra and abaca) and/or marine and fishery products (including fresh and dried fish, squid, abalone, mother of pearl, shark's fin and seaweed), as well, as is often the case, the financing through credit, of small farmers, fishers and pearl-divers. The natural produce is brought in from the surrounding hinterlands for export to other parts of the Philippines for processing. On the other hand, it also includes, the import and retailing/wholesaling of various commodities (everything from rice - which is not produced in sufficient quantities locally - coca-cola and cigarettes, to clothing and hardware) from other parts of the Philippines.

There are also the so-called "barter trading" activities between various free-ports in Malaysia (and to a lesser extent ports in Indonesia, Singapore and Hong Kong) and Jolo as well as Zamboanga, bringing in "blue seal" (American) cigarettes, Chinese textiles and Indonesian batik, imported ready to wear clothing, perfume, shoes, electronic consumer goods, as well as coffee and can goods, both for consumption locally as well as for export to other parts of the Philippines (see Chapter 9 for more details on consumption), which both in addition to and often in conjunction with cash cropping, has been a critical component of the post-WWII economy.

At the end of WWII, as a result of increased armaments, the influx of reparation payments, back-pay for locally recognized guerillas and a booming cigarette market - fuelled in part by the widespread distribution of American cigarettes during the war - there was a resurgence of external Sulu trading or "smuggling" as it was called since

the traders sought to bypass the governments restrictive import duties. After the conflict between the Philippine government and the MNLF broke out in the 1970's, Marcos as part of his attempt to pacify local Muslim groups established a legal barter trade (Che Man 1990:151) which removed some of the trading restrictions. Most traders, however, in order to side-step government restrictions, the red-tape and necessary bribes which often had to be paid to government officials, continued to operate illegal or "tora-tora" operations alongside legal barter trading runs.¹⁸

Many of the present day political and economic Muslim elite in the town of Jolo, as elsewhere in Sulu, were amongst those who, dominated this trade from early on (Arce 1983). Indeed, whilst other mercantile businesses were/are often dominated by those identified as Chinese, and to a lesser extent prior to 1972, Christian Filipino, smuggling/barter trading was and still is dominated by the those persons who identify themselves as Muslim Tausug and Sama. This is not only because smuggling/barter trading is a risky business which provides ample room for "testing" one's courage and bravery (that is one's potency) (Kiefer 1972b; Moloney 1968), but also because it requires networks of followers and armaments or, as local persons put it, *kusug* (strength), which is the single most important form of capital in the local economy. This is, as I discuss below, closely related to local politics and is something over which local Muslim Tausug elites have a monopoly.

The political situation in the town of Jolo and its position vis-a-vis Manila, the Autonomous Government and the surrounding hinterlands is complex. When I left the field in 1992 it was difficult to gauge how successful ARMM (Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao) had been or would be. On the one hand, the MNLF had not recognized the governments arrangement for autonomy, pressing instead for full independence and a withdrawal of government troops (de Jesus 1989:276). On the other hand, in the town of Jolo at least, whilst regional autonomy held out for many (especially amongst the more educated bureaucrats and civil servants) the possibility of the establishment and enshrinement of a civil society based on Shari'a rather than Philippine government law, they were also, at least in 1991-92, generally pessimistic about the desire or capability of ARMM, whose governor was from and

capital were in Maguindanao, to ensure the flow of federal monies into Sulu (McBeth 1989; Tanggol 1994:108).¹⁹

In terms of the 'real politik' of the situation, however, the political and economic (mayoral and provincial government) elite, most of whose electorate remains outside the town of Jolo, have been able to accommodate or at the very least come to some kind of "de facto" working agreement with the MNLF. Although the true extent of MNLF control is difficult to assess, as in the 1970's, they are said to control everything outside of Jolo town, and if nothing else, still remain a potent symbol of Muslim invincibility and separateness.²⁰ At the same time, the local power elite remain those who through one means or another (including defection from the MNLF) were able to obtain and maintain positions in political office.

Political-office is important in several respects. First of all, it is an important marker of place, in much the same way that being a *datu* in the sultan's *ruma bicara* was in the traditional Sulu polity. However, it is now terms like *mayul* (Mayor), together with notions of the professional. Similarly, political office also provides a means for incorporating followers and giving them a place within this symbolic universe through appointing and hiring them to various positions within the civil service and state bureaucracy. Indeed, although the regalia of the traditional Sultanate remains one point of reference for local Muslim identity, there have been few attempts by local elites to employ traditional titles in the same way this has been done elsewhere in Mindanao (McKenna 1992). Rather the discourse both of the educated-professional bourgeoisie and local elites is, in a parallel manner to the discourse of *gay-bantut's* surrounding style and beauty (cf. Chapter 9 and 10 below), framed as a case of traditional Muslim values being interwoven with and used to create, "native modern style".

Political (as well as bureaucratic) office is also important in as much as it places the holder in a position of gatekeeper for state funds. This is not simply a case of being able to control funds and channel them either directly in the form of gifts or indirectly through various "development" projects to followers, but also of being in the position

of creditor in various forms of debt (*utang*) relationships. Educational institutions, which I have highlighted as being a key locus of the *ilmu' milikan*, are a primary instance of this. Not only are they the largest public sector employers in Sulu, but they also account for the most "professionals". According to the latest census figures, elementary and high school teachers and administrators number approximately 2500, comprising 80% of those classified as "professionals" (Census of Sulu, P-H Table 15 [National Statistics Office 1990b]).

As with other public sectors, educational institutions appear to be an active field for a variety of entrepreneurial activities, most of which involves various forms of credit. According to many teachers (and I am here simply reporting what I was often told by them), senior school and provincial officials often act as much in the capacity of personal financiers than as school administrators, loaning out money on what is usually called the five-six plan, in which for every five pesos borrowed, six pesos must be returned within a specified time period. Teachers, moreover, in an extension of this system often act as creditors in relation to their students or more precisely their student's parents, either in the straight form of "five-six" cash relations or in various forms of instalment sales. Thus, for instance, articles of clothing required for school "occasions" are sometimes purchased in bulk by teachers and then resold to students on an instalment basis, so that a shirt costing a teacher 100 pesos will be sold for 150 pesos, the purchaser making instalment payments of 5 pesos per day.

Finally, political office, and in particular mayoral or provincial government positions, are important, because it provides access to the protection of the military as well as military hardware. Indeed, if, as is often reported by local persons to be the case, it is difficult to draw a line between the MNLF and local strong men (including government officials) outside the town, it is often difficult to draw a line between the political elite and the Philippine military inside the town. There is another dimension to this. Outside the town, M-16's and/or Kalashnikov's are considered a basic household appliance, which are carried openly by wealthy and poor, MNLF cadre and non-partisans alike. In the town of Jolo, however, it is illegal to bear arms (at least for the relatively poor and peripheral), and weapons are concentrated in the hands of

a few wealthy and political elite families and their immediate followers (*tindug*), many of whom are uniformed members either of the Army or the officially recognized Philippine National Police.

This appears to have created two distinct patterns of violence. In the hinterlands of Jolo (and I am here only going by second hand stories and informants reports), the ongoing cycle of violent feuding, negotiation and settlement of the sort documented by Kiefer (1972b) continues to be if not an everyday occurrence certainly a major preoccupation. However, the traditional Tausug system of mediation and arbitration by local headmen appears stretched to its breaking point by the sheer fire-power of the weapons and the scale of bodily harm which is exacted.²¹

On the other hand, whilst this kind of everyday violence is largely absent in the town of Jolo, when violence does erupt, it is usually on a much larger scale between one of a handful of heavily armed factions in the town, vying, amongst other things, for political office.²² Such outbreaks of violence, especially the callous disregard for the life and property of innocent bystanders (which is to some extent avoided in the hinterlands), as well as the failure of the combatants to offer compensation for injury or death, goes completely against the framework of Tausug traditional law. The point, however, is that whereas persons in the *gimba* (hinterlands) always have immediate recourse to their own weapons and means of violence, so that any unprovoked killing would result in retaliatory violence, the majority of persons within the town of Jolo are unarmed and at the mercy both of local elites and the State armed forces, who are both unable and unwilling to disarm the local power-elites and so effectively ensure the concentration of power in the hands of the few.

The response to such outbreaks of violence are varied. On the one hand, more educated and "professional" towns-persons, even whilst they are usually able to pinpoint with reasonable accuracy the person or persons behind the violence, interpret the incidents as examples of the backwardness and lawlessness of the hinterlands spilling over into the town. Several people suggested that what was needed was better education and the development of the hinterlands (*gimba*) as well as better

policing in the town. Even persons who speak about the sources of the violence, usually attribute it not to factional leaders, but to what is said to be their uncontrollable underlings (*bata'*) who again are usually said to be uneducated, ignorant, backward individuals from the *gimba* (hinterland).

On the other hand, less educated and/or poorer people in the town of Jolo itself are more direct in attributing the cause and source of the violence, and tend to interpret both the escalation in the scale of violence outside the town and the irrational violence within the town as a general break down in the traditional moral order embodied in the notions of *adat* (customary law and tradition) and the abandonment of the ways of the *kamaasan* (forbears). Moreover, although there is some expectation that the military and police are there to protect them, they at times both resent them (the marines in particular) as markers of Christian Filipino control and see them as ineffective and useless.

The more radical, educated, nationalistic Islamist, mirroring the rhetoric of the MNLF, tend to see the solution to the problem in terms of the complete withdrawal of the Philippine State armed forces and the establishment of genuine autonomy under Qur'anic law. Some of the poor and undereducated similarly see the solution in terms of a complete withdrawal of Philippine Government troops, although the scenario they envisage is different from that of more radical Islamic nationalist. As expressed by the head of the household where I was staying, it was a matter of withdrawing all government troops and allowing the wealthy and power-elite to do battle until they had effectively decimated each other. At this point, the local population would request the Americans to come back in and sort the place out.

As with much of the rhetoric amongst the poor, however, I think it is important to see this discourse not as a genuine appeal to or conception of "the Americans" as saviours, but primarily as a symbolic foil of what is regarded to be the corrupt and abusive power of the power elite, the *tau kusug*. This is especially the case either amongst those persons who classified themselves as poor and powerless (*misikin way kusug*) or those who, in an expression of extreme alienation, classified themselves as,

miskin way makamakusug - poor and without anyone to act as a power on one's behalf. As one man (who's daughter had been one of some 50 school children injured in one of the battles) put it, drawing an allusion to the so-called "EDSA revolution" which toppled Marcos, "there is no people's power in Sulu."

This does not mean, however, that the poor passively accept the status quo. As I have already suggested (Chapter 3) and as I illustrate in more detail below (Chapter 9) although the local elites are seen as possessing power and other indexical signs of potency, including political office, education, beauty or style, this is not, in the eyes of the poor at least, sufficient to constitute a status or social significance. Rather persons who are poor solicit compassion from and press claims on the wealthy (although usually not collectively) on the basis that it is only by recognizing or encompassing them in reciprocal exchange that the wealthy are constituted not simply as powerful persons (*tau kusug*) but as big or great persons (*tau dakula*). Alternately, when as is often the case, such recognition is not forthcoming, persons may treat the wealthy (in what is a mirror image of the way they are treated) with cynical disregard, denying their place in social memory, their *remembrances*.

4.7 Summary: Potency and Political Practise.

As I indicated in the introduction, my reading of Sulu history has been informed by several inter-related concerns or interpretive themes. One is potency and its relation to political practise: that is, the attempts to locate or objectify potency and define the channels through which it flows. On the one hand, I have argued, the need to accumulate and disseminate signs of potency was a driving force behind local responses to wider "global" and colonial political and economic relations (which themselves were informed by various motivational forces). I demonstrated this both with respect to the florescence of the Sulu as a regional trading emporium and the new petit bourgeoisie and bureaucratic elite in the town of Jolo. On the other hand, I have also suggested that "real" economic power - used here in the broadest sense of instrumental force or practical reason - has been crucial to the establishment and maintenance of a person's hold over spiritual power or potency, as I have

demonstrated with respect both to the traditional Sulu polity and contemporary politics in the town of Jolo, Sulu.

More specifically, I have been concerned to demonstrate the historical precedents not only for the active appropriation of foreign ideology and imported material goods as signs of potency, but also for the local concern with, and socially constitutive potential of, such things as clothing and appearance, both of which are central to present day practises of beauty, such as are evident in the beauty contest which I briefly described in Chapter 2 above. In addition, I have outlined the wider implications of such transformative appropriation for local identity, and in particular the contradictions entailed by potency understood within the framework of Islamic ideology and potency understood within the various idioms of America: a contradiction which is, in part, structured by the specific historical circumstances of colonialism and the forced incorporation of Sulu into the post-colonial Philippine state.

However, while the major developments and incidents of the 20th century in Sulu have been characterized as being alternately one of collusion or resistance (Tan 1977), I think this fundamentally glosses over the fact that both are moments in an overall process with which local persons have been occupied for several centuries: that is, to negotiate the contradictions of an identity which is defined as much by the active appropriation of otherness, as by its, at times, adamant and violent refusal to be overwhelmed by otherness. As I shall argue in the latter part of the thesis, just as there has been an attempt to carve out a conceptual space for the appropriation of the *ilmu' milikan* (the knowledge-power of the American) so to the *gay/bantut* as the embodiment and purveyors of beauty and istyle which as I have already suggested are part and parcel of the *ilmu' milikan*, are largely circumscribed by their engenderment and valorization as neither men, nor women; keeping separate as they enable a reassertion and reformulation of local identity.

Finally, I have been concerned to illustrate the way in which the meaning or social legitimacy of potency or power as well as the meaning of local identity has been, and

continues to be, negotiated and contested in social practise, a point which as I demonstrate below has important implications for the *gay/bantut*. Although the *gay/bantut* have been primarily valorized as mediatory figures in local identity, they are nonetheless multi-valent symbols which may be and indeed are read from a variety of different perspectives. Persons who define themselves as poor, for instance, may at times symbolically link the wealthy and political elite with the *gay/bantut*, as persons who respectively possess beauty and power, but who are symbolically circumscribed outside the domain of recognized human sociality: the domain of power without relation.

Endnotes.

1. Although Arabs were largely excluded from the South China and Southeast Asian trade by the thirteenth century, Islam had been well established in Southern China by this time, so that Chinese Muslims traders which were increasingly active in the ever growing Southeast Asian trade may well have figured prominently in this process (Kiefer 1972a:21; Majul 1973; Warren 1981:5-6). Indeed, the Chinese annals records receiving emissaries from Sulu (cf. Zaide [1990] "Sulu Tribute Embassies to China.") one of whom is said to have been buried in China, suggesting that Sulu was also part of the vast Chinese tributary system (Wolters 1982:49-76).
2. Milner, for instance, has argued with respect to Sumatra-Perlak, that the process of Islamicization occurred in "the idiom of rajaship (1983:27-31). In particular Milner draws attention to the fact that medieval Islam presented two key concepts that had resonance with the raja. The first, the result of "Persianized" Islam and kingship drew attention to the ruler as being the "one who governs in place of God." These ideas of kingship can be seen in the adoption of titles such as Sultan or Shah. A second feature noted by many historians is the presence of Sufi mysticism, especially the doctrine of the "perfect man", the saintly figure who realizes his oneness with the Divine Being and guides his disciples along the path he has trodden. Thus, the raja is both a link between the microcosm and macrocosm as well as spiritual leader, "a *boddhisattva* figure caring for the spiritual welfare of his people (Milner 83: 39)."
3. The most substantial archaeological evidence to date was a copper inscription in what appears to be an old Javanese-Tagalog script found in Luzon, which has recently been translated by Postma (1991) and which shows some indication of contact between Sri Vijaya and chiefdoms in the Northern Philippines. What other little historical, linguistic and archaeological data is discussed by Francisco (1965).
4. In Sulu, zero and first degree siblings are both in Tausug and Sama differentiated although the sensibility clearly holds, and in fact the sibling metaphor extends through to all persons of one's relative generational standing with whom one might be expected to be married and have sexual intercourse (see chapter 5.4 below)
5. The only preserved copy of such written material appears to be that translated by Saleeby (1908/1963), which is indicative of the current state of play amongst the former Sulu nobility.
6. Saleeby (1968:43-44) suggests, that the genealogies presents a reinterpretation of what was actually military conquest by Raja Baguinda. Again, however, this might be read, as in Hawaiian mythical accounts as a case of a usurper king being successfully incorporated or appropriated within mythic history.
7. As Kiefer (1972a) notes, one of the major symbolic as well as economic and legal powers of the sultan was his position as chief among chiefly mediators, who periodically issued diwan, a law code which specified punishment and set fines.

8. A useful comparative illustration is the Moroccan Sultanate which Geertz (1968) and Rabinow (1976) discuss at length. In Morocco, the combination of hereditary sanctity with baraka as an outcome of the maraboutic crisis, associated with sufi religious communities who attempted to gain political power, was of key importance for the success of the Alawite Sultanate. Whereas previously there was a crisis between those whose political/religious power was associated with genealogical descent from the prophet-the shurfa, and those whose claim to power was based on personal baraka, the new situation was one in which the miraculous was, as Rabinow (1976:8) says:

. . .subordinated to and institutionalized through a hereditary mode of transmission: namely, the descendants of particularly holy men (the Prophet Mohammed being the holiest) were now seen as more likely to possess religious power and authority than those lacking genealogical connections. .
. *Baraka* was seen to flow along genealogical lines.

9. Recent linguistic and historical reconstruction, in fact suggests that Sinama and not Tausug was the language of the original inhabitants of Sulu. Pallesen (1981; and cf. Frake 1980:311-332), working on the basis of linguistic data and glottochronology posits a longer running scenario of ethnic and political development in the region beginning some 300-400 years prior to the establishment of Islam, the Sultanate and the Tausug language when there were only small Sama communities dispersed throughout Sulu. The only form of political organization according to Pallesen at that time above the household (which was the primary economic and political unit) were household heads who because of their exceptional ability may have exercised some leadership over a small cluster of households (cf Ben Hann 1991 who has provided a clear account of this kind of leadership in current Sama Dilaut communities near Siasi [sea-oriented Sama] in which 10 families are lead by leader associated with ancestors [*botang matto'a*]). Out of this emerged a community of Sama (which Pallesen identifies as Northern Sama, such as the Balangingi') who were traders and possibly slave-raiders with the *nakuda'* (leader, from Arabic *nakhoda* [ships captain]) gaining status throughout the community for their trading/raiding abilities. These "men of prowess" as they might be designated following Wolters (1982) established trading contacts and small satellite communities in Northeastern Mindanao (Butuanun, near the mouth of the Agusan river), intermarrying (perhaps through capture) local women. Interestingly, several prehistoric boats have been recovered from the Butuanun region dating from around this period, although no one has of yet suggested any direct connection between them and Sulu traders (Peralta 1980; Ronquillo 1987). According to Pallesen, the Tausug language, emerged out of a convergence of Butuanun language and Samalan language in these bilingual communities, and upon their migration back to Sulu increasingly became the prestige language and symbolic marker of the emergent mercantile elite and local chiefs.

10. What I am trying to get away from here is simply a reading of the myths as straightforward legitimating charters in which the meaning of the myths can be separated from what might otherwise be considered real sources of political power. As Kapferer (1988:45) in his discussion of the Sri Lankan origin myths suggests, it is precisely the attempt to 'demythologize' that the logic and reason of the 'myth',

and thus by extension its full legitimating power, is lost. Similarly, to say that the rapid spread of Islam was because it imparted a ready made ideological legitimacy on new polities and pirate chiefs (Wolf 82: 58), is to gloss over the real power of ideology. As Sahlins (1981; 1985) suggests, one way that history can be understood, is by reading practise as an ongoing dialectic between the embodiment and creative transformation of mythic structures.

11. Comments on their courage, bravery, valour and success in defending Islam is also often part of the descriptive commentary of past sultans recounted in the *Khutbahs* and *Kitabs* documented by Majul. Amongst others, Amir ul-Umara is said to be "a champion of the Islamic faith"; Nasir ud-Din I is called "powerful and victorious"; Sultan Muwallit Wasit is said to have, "fought hard and long against the white men both on land and sea".

12. A string of Spanish governors ineptly attempted to play a mediating role in bringing about the resolution of the crises, and finally having decided to support the Raja Muda or heir apparent, they humiliated him by suggesting that the investiture be in Manila under the tutelage of the Spanish governor-general. This affront to the sultan which was by an extension an affront on Islam, was met with fierce resistance and a seven year period of violence ensued throughout much of Sulu as Spanish forces- bolstered by the *deportados* (convict labour) from other parts of the Philippines- attempted to impose another Castilian selected sultan on Sulu.

13. The major themes of the act which abrogated the Bates treaty had already been laid out previously by, amongst others, General Davis who in 1901 had recommended,

- 1)that the Bates agreement be abrogated;
- 2)that no sultan or king over all the Moros of any region or over other datus be recognized;
- 3)that hereditary datus be recognized as headmen "in the several bands"- receiving payment for public service only if they perform such but otherwise receiving no pension, salary or subsidy;
- 4)that the government over the Moros be military.

14. As General Leonard Wood, the first military governor writing to an English friend, put it:

You are quite content to maintain rajahs and sultans and other species of royalty, but we, with our plain ideas of doing things, find these gentlemen outside of our scheme of government, and so have to start at this kind of proposition a little differently. Our policy is to develop individualism among these people and, little by little, teach them to stand upon their own feet independent of petty chieftains. (Gowing 83: 115).

15. As Kiefer (1972b:22) points out, the sultan and other datus in fact retained many of his temporal powers including his function as a legal official administering *agama* law and collecting fines in rural Sulu, which as Thomas (cf. 1971:156-237) was a ongoing source of dispute both between colonial officials and a growing educated bureaucratic elite. To some extent this created a dual system of law, one operating

in the hinterlands and one in the town of Jolo. At the sametime, many of the former aristocracy or persons associated with the aristocracy became part of the new urban bureaucratic elite, including Hadji Butu, Hadji Gulamu Rasul and Datu Ombra Amilbangsa.

16. In 1921, for instance, fifty-seven prominent Muslim leaders in Sulu signed a petition stating they wanted to be made a permanent part of American territory, a sentiment which is still sometimes repeated by a variety of persons (Forbes, vol II 1928:47,54-86).

17. Official population figures for the town of Jolo in 1970 are recorded as 46,586. In 1975, one year after the 1974 burning of Jolo, it is listed as 37,623 whilst in 1980 the population is listed as 52,429 (National Statistics Office, provincial profiles, 1990).

18. In fact, under Marcos, barter trading was administered by the Southern Philippines Development Administration (SPDA) which in Sulu was controlled by the **military** Southern Command (Southcom) in Zamboanga City.

19. During the recent transition to ARMM many persons working in various sectors of the civil service were not paid over a period of almost six months. Moreover, local persons were concerned about losing control to beaucracy in Cotabato. Thus, for instance, officials at the Sulu Barter Trade, told me that every official barter trading trip now had to be officially approved by then governor Candao, who they suggested held up trips sponsored by local business persons in favour of traders from Maguindanao.

20. The actual situation outside of the town of Jolo is difficult to judge, and I am quite skeptical about Che Man's (1990:94-96) assertion, based on his brief tour into rural Jolo with a MNLF representative, that the MNLF have political control of the surrounding countryside which is divided into "liberated" zones. Person often spoke of so-called "lost commands", bands of MNLF who were tied to particular commanders which local persons, including those who traveled between town and gimba as, at times little different from common bandits. They also spoke with resentment about the "tax" which these bands would exact on Jeeps making the trip back and forth into the gimba. Nevertheless, it would be equally wrong to suggest that the MNLF is a negligible force. Certainly the MNLF carries much symbolic weight and should another charismatic presence, like Nur Misuari, arrive on the scene and show a renewed capability to garner outside support their may well be new outbreaks of seperatist violence. Indeed, since leaving the Philippines, Basilan Island, just north of Jolo, has been the site for a recent resurgence in violence led by a group called the Abu Sayyef.

21. Kiefer (1968c) had already noted the strain which was placed on the traditional system of settling dispute brought about by assault rifles in the 1960's. This has only increased in recent years, with single feuds according to some of my informants resulting in up to as many as 50 deaths in a single encounter. Older Tausug men in

fact frequently cited this as a grave problem in attempting to mediate disputes, saying that persons would rather invest in buying better and more effective firearms than reach an agreement.

22. There were three major incidents over the year and half period of my field work in the town of Jolo, in which everything from grenade launchers to armored personnel carriers and tanks were employed, although happily I was not present in the town during these occasions.

*Beauty and Power, Part II:
Towards an Ethnography of the 'Gay/Bantut'.*

Chapter 5. On the Engenderment of Gay/Bantut Sexuality.

5.1 Introduction: defining the protocols and locating the discourse.

In this chapter I present an overview of the local protocols within which *gay/bantut* transgendering and homosexuality are located. In the first part of the chapter, I look at how the *gay/bantut* are conventionally defined, and define themselves, as being like women, in terms of contrasting notions of masculine and feminine sexuality. I also explore the category *silahis* or *double-blade*, which unlike the category *gay/bantut* only ever emerges as gossip, and refers to men who are normally thought of as *real men*, that is as sexual penetrators, but who are said to desire to be penetrated like the *bantut*. In the second part of the chapter, however, I demonstrate how, in the conventional reading, the *bantut* emerge not simply as persons who are considered to be like women, but who, more specifically, are considered to be, on the one hand, impotent men, and, on the other hand, un-realizable and defiled/defiling women. As I suggest in final part of the chapter, this reading of gender and sexual ambiguity may be seen as one transformation of the way in which gender and processes of engenderment are more generally constructed in the region, articulating common themes in cosmology, marriage transactions and kinship relations. At the same time, it has also been critically informed by, and increasingly reformulated and valorized in terms of, the polarization and politicization of local ethnic identities and boundaries, a point which I develop and explore in more detail later in the thesis.

The primary focus of this chapter is sexuality and in particular the way in which *gay/bantut* sexuality is locally engendered. This is not because I understand processes of engenderment to be necessarily or causally linked to sexuality, but rather because the local situation specifies that sexuality is part of the realization of gender and the establishment of meaningful human relationships. In speaking of the local protocols of engendered sexuality, moreover, I am following Winkler (1990), who in an insightful and imaginative account of sexuality in Ancient Greece, employed the term protocol not only to indicate the symbolic framework within which sex and gender categories were constructed, but also to indicate the fact that, precisely because of the

conventional or arbitrary nature of the protocols, they were always open to contravention.

In his discussion of the *kinaidos* (sexually deviant men) of classical Athens, Winkler argues that whilst *kinaidos* did not refer to homosexuals or homosexuality per se, it did refer to a category of person who because of, amongst other things, their penetrated role in homosexual intercourse, "flagrantly violated or contravened the dominant social definition of masculinity (Winkler 1990:46)". Winkler's point, however, is not simply to say that sexuality (including homosexual roles) was distinctly engendered and that persons were classified accordingly, but to explore the particular context within which such categories might have been employed in practise.

Contrasting his approach with those that begin with, "The Greeks believed. . .", he says,

Even when the correct protocols have been identified so that we can see exactly why our current sexual categories do not translate into Greek, we must further notice the many limitations on the enforcement of one's obedience to those protocols. The texts we study are, for the most part, rather like men's coffee house talk. The legislative intent contains a fair amount of bluff, of saving face: they regularly lay down laws which are belied by the jokes those same men will later tell. What we do not have written down are the stage directions (as it were) for those texts-- the crossed fingers, the knowing nods of conspiratorial agreement. Yet there are revealing moments- hesitations, refusals to speak, backtracking-- that can be assembled into a more convincing ethnography.

Winkler's point is useful not least because the definition of the *kinaidos* as penetrated citizen-men resonates with certain aspects of the local definition of the *bantut* and, more particularly, of the *silahis* or *double blade*, but also because it highlights the wider social and political context within which these terms are respectively employed and have become valorized in practise. Much of the ethnography I present here with relation to *gay/bantut* sexuality is not, in the strictest sense, participant observation, but is mainly reliant on what various persons told me about them and what they told me about themselves. However, I was able to capture some of the "knowing nods" and "whispers" surrounding the discourse, as I illustrate below in relation to the category of the *silahis* or *double-blade*. Moreover, as I outline in a subsequent

chapter (Chapter 7), whilst the conventions of local *gay* sexuality are very specific, there is in fact a much wider field of potential sexual play than is at first acknowledged, although this is, in turn, related to the various transactional scenarios through which sex is engaged.

5.2 The *gay/bantut*: preliminary definitions.

I should like to begin by briefly introducing my two language informants, who were part of the "coincidences" of field work that led me into a prolonged investigation of *gays* in the Southern Philippines.¹ Joseph, my first language helper, never directly told or otherwise suggested to me that he was *gay*, but he was commonly suspected to be a *bantut*, which I will for the moment gloss, following Hart (1968), as a local term that encompasses homosexuality, transsexualism and transvestism (Tagalog *bakla*, Cebuano *bayot*). A Sama from Siasi, Joseph helped me during the initial stages of fieldwork in Zamboanga whilst I was learning Central Sinama and Tausug, acting as a translator during initial household surveys as well as transcribing tapes. When I began field work he was undertaking a Master of Science degree in Biology at the Western Mindanao State University (WMSU) in Zamboanga, and he lived with three of his sisters who were also studying in Zamboanga. When I asked his friends why they thought he was a *bantut*, they told me that he did most of the household chores, including the laundry, cooking and cleaning, and that ever since he was a young boy his playmates and *barkada* (circle of usually same gender friends) were women. In fact most people who had met Joseph would usually tell me, when he was not around, that they suspected he was a *bantut*, because the way he talked and moved was soft (*malunuk*). This designation was qualified, however, by saying they were not sure if he was a "real" *bantut* (*bantut tuud*) or a *bantut-bantut*.²

For the Tausug and Sama, *bantuts* are distinguished mainly between "real" *bantuts* and those persons who *magbantut-bantut* - that is either pretend to be or play at being *bantut*, although not everyone will necessarily agree on who is and who is not a "real" *bantut*. The designation *bantut-bantut* is generally used in reference to young boys or adolescents whose actions are effeminate or whose playmates and friends remain primarily women, but who are, as yet, considered to be too young to know

if they are "real" *bantut*. Thus I have overheard several instances in which a parent "jokingly" reprimanded a child acting effeminately or playing "house-house" with their elder sisters by saying, *Mayta kaw magbantut-bantut? Gana-gana mahinang kaw bantut tuud*, "Why are you playing at being a *bantut*? Later on you will become a real *bantut*."

The designation *bantut-bantut* may also be applied to young men who cross dress but who are thought to be fakes. Thus, for instance, it was sometimes suggested of the many *bantut* that worked in the beauty parlours, that they were just pretending to be *bantut* as a way to get close to women and to make money at the same time. Persons would sometimes site an example of a case in which a young man posing as a *bantut* ended up getting an unsuspecting girl pregnant, because *bantuts* and unmarried women may and do sleep together alone in the same room, something which would not be acceptable for men. On the other hand, older adolescents and young men who do not work in parlours or cross dress may also be considered a "*bantut-bantut*", if, as in Joseph's case, most of their friends remain women, they regularly perform household chores and their speech and body movements are soft or effeminate (*malunuk*). Moreover, men who show no desire to be married, such as the *subul liyaunan* (older bachelors, 25+), may also be suspected *bantuts*.

The question is, what defines a *true bantut*? While Joseph was only suspected to be a *bantut*, Ernie, my second language informant, was commonly regarded to be a real *bantut*. A Tausug-Chinese (*lannang*) from Basilan, Ernie was a graduate of the Zamboanga Chinese High School, having completed a B.A. at WMSU in Teaching. While assisting me with language learning and tape transcribing, he was also finishing a course in Nursing at the Ateneo de Zamboanga, and by the time my field work was completed he had graduated and was making plans to take the Nursing board exam and go abroad to Saudi Arabia and from there hopefully on to the United States and/or England. He is fluent in Mandarin, Amoy, Tagalog, English, Tausug and Chabacano (a creolized Spanish spoken in Zamboanga). I met Ernie through his first cousin with whose family I had become good friends. She suggested that Ernie might be able to assist me after she found out that Joseph, because of his University

schedule, could no longer help me on a day to day basis. Neither she nor her husband had ever mentioned that Ernie was a *bantut*. She had only told me that he was bright and spoke English well, although she did seem to find it all a bit amusing.

My first impression of Ernie was of a smart looking, very articulate person who, at times, struck me as being effeminate - both in relation to my own notions of effeminate behaviour as well as in relation to the majority of Tausug and Sama men: certainly more so than Joseph. Prompted by my own suspicions, based on the little experience I had with how people defined *bantut*, as well as by his cousin's bemused laughter, I took her and Joseph aside, and asked them if Ernie was a *bantut*. They told me, with much laughter, that he was. On our next meeting, I asked Ernie if he was a *bantut*. He put his handkerchief up to his face, laughed embarrassedly and told me that he was a true and "inborn" *gay*, explaining that there were many different kinds of *gays*. It was largely through Ernie, his younger brother, who was also *gay*, and his family, that I began to get my first introduction to real *gays*.³

One of the first things I learned from Ernie, is that *gays* do not like to be called *bantut*. This was one of the reasons for Ernie's initial embarrassment when I asked him if he was a *bantut*. When *gays* use the term *bantut*, they most often use it in a sarcastic manner in situations in which they sought to distance themselves from some other *gay* or some other object, or as a kind of verbal come back like "piss off". Thus, for instance, I was talking to one of my *gay* friends in the beauty parlour about watching pornographic films- and he teasingly pointed to another friend who was in the middle of cutting someone's hair and said, "she's in there everyday", to which his friend replied, *Ikaw, bantut!- you [are the one who does that] bantut!*

The point is that in addition to being associated with cross-dressing and beauty, the term *bantut* is also associated with the vulgar and the sexually illicit, and it was only occasionally that I heard *gays* refer to themselves as *bantut* in instances which did not have negative connotations. Thus, although the term *gay*, as in Manila (Matthews 1990), may at time be used to signal the carefree lifestyle and casual sexuality associated with young adult men (both *gay/bantut* and straight), it is also used more

critically by the *gays* to distance themselves from the negative and socially circumscribing implications of the term *bantut*, as will become evident below. It is necessary to point out from the outset, however, that the term *gay* does not signal a male homosexual identity in the same way that it often does in Great Britain or America, and I have italicized the word *gay* throughout the thesis if only to remind readers of its specific local meaning.

As if drawn straight out of an American textbook on transsexualism, the most common response I received to the question, "what does it mean to be *gay*?" was, "to have a women's heart stuck inside of a man's body," (the answer always given in English, although as noted, I usually spoke in Tausug). As another older *gay* put it, "every man should have a woman, but deep inside *I am* a woman- a woman's heart stuck inside a man's body." But whilst there is an almost universally expressed sense amongst the *gays* that being *gay* is about being a "woman", when pressed to explain this more fully, most *gays* have difficulty articulating precisely what they mean.

There appears to be two main aspects to these cross-gender expressions. On the one hand, the discourse and practise of beauty emerge as pivotal to *gay* self-representations of femininity. They frequently called attention to the care of their body; their concern with cleanliness and beauty; their use of facial creams and body lotion; their wearing make up and jewellery and cross-dressing (either on an everyday basis or just on *occasions*) as defining what it meant to be a woman.

Equally, however, being a woman was often defined in terms of sexual relations and romantic interests. *Like women* the object - *krush* (crush) - of their sexual desire is said to be men and not women, and in particular *like women* they desire to be penetrated by a *real man*. As one *bantut* put it, "What makes us a woman is how we treat our boyfriends." That is, they desire to play the *female* role with their *boyfriends*, and a majority of the *gays* I have talked to say this means they desire to be penetrated in anal sex, or in the words of some *gays*, to let their boyfriends *work them*.

All of this fits very closely with what I was told about the *bantut*. The *bantut* are commonly recognized to engage in homosexuality and in particular to be those who give oral sex to men and/or who play the receptor role in anal intercourse (*nagjubul*). But, as is clear from the discussion of the *bantut-bantut* above, transgender expression, including the adoption of the movements and postures (*palangay*) as well as the dress of women, is also seen to be characteristic of the *bantut*. Thus, another term used in reference to the *bantut* in this regard is (Tausug) *binabae* and (Sinama) *dnda-dnda*, both diminutive forms of the respective generic word for woman, which denotes men who act like or pretend to be women.

What emerges is that, as Hart (1968) points out with regard to the *bayot* in Dumaguete, whereas in the west the categories of transsexualism, transvestism and homosexuality are carefully distinguished, in the Philippines no such distinctions are made. The *bantut* might thus fit within the general rubric of what has come to be called transgender or gender defined homosexuality. Greenberg (1988:41) defines transgender homosexuality as the situation when, "one of the partners relinquishes the gender (sexual identity) ordinarily associated with his or her anatomical sex and lays claim to the gender associated with the opposite sex". Gender-defined homosexuality, according to Murray (1992a:xxi-xxii), is a situation when a, "sexually receptive partner is expected to enact some aspects of the feminine gender role: to behave and/or sound and/or dress in ways appropriate to women in that society." Cross-cultural examples usually cited as transgenderal homosexuality include, amongst others, the *berdache* of various native North American societies, the *mahus* and *fa'afafine* of Tahiti and Samoa respectively, as well as the *hijras* in South Asia.

There are several theoretical points I would make by way of comparison. Whitehead's (1981) explication of the North American *berdache* in particular is, as I noted in the introduction, important because she was one of the first anthropologists to argue against the then conventional reading of the *berdache* as sexual invert whose homosexuality was "dealt with" through transvestism and other cross-gender institutions (cf. Devereaux 1937). In short, a simple notion of gender as sexual identity (as for instance employed in Greenberg's definition, cited above) was

discarded in favour of an organizational and symbolic approach in which sex and gender were treated as separable constructs. Thus, Whitehead suggested, the *berdache* were first and foremost gender-crossers, rather than homosexuals, whose concern was primarily oriented towards being socially- that is occupationally and stylistically- defined as a woman, as a means of attaining status and prestige.

Whitehead's analysis of the *berdache* is useful and illuminating with regards to the *bantut* in several respects not least because it articulates with many aspects of the expressed *gay* transgender project (see Chapter 8 below). However, in common with other cultural constructionist positions, in the attempt to disaggregate sexuality and gender, it tended to gloss over sexuality completely (cf. Plumwood 1989 and Butler 1990 for a discussion and critique of the sex-gender distinction). Bradd Shore's (1981) brief account of the *fa'afafine* of Samoa, similarly dismissed sexuality as irrelevant to the definition of the *fa'afafine*, even whilst, as Murray (1992a:157; Mageo 1992) has more recently noted there is evidence to suggest that homosexuality was, and still is, a defining part of the behavioural repertoire associated with them. This same trend continues in much of the anthropological writing related to cross, mixed or transgenderal expressions (see e.g., Atkinson's 1990 brief account of the *bante* amongst the Wana in Sulawesi which glosses over the whole issue of homosexuality).

Whatever the case might be with regards to the *berdache* and *fa'afafine*, it would clearly be mistaken to disregard *gay-bantut* sexuality. It is not strictly homosexuality or sexual orientation *per se*, however, which is the defining characteristic (as Whitham 1992:231-248 suggests with regards to the Cebuano *bayot* in Cebu city) and I am not arguing for an essentialist definition of homosexuality. Rather it is clear that sex is both symbolically and organizationally important in defining gender, or at the very least, to the way in which it is defined in local protocols. In particular, as is the case with the well known *activo/pasivo* distinction in Latin America and the Mediterranean (Murray 1992a: xxii), what is seen both by the *gays* as well as more generally to distinguish between the *real man* and the *bantut* is the respective penetrator and penetrated (insertor/insertee) role.

When *gays* talk about being *worked* by the man, anal penetration is precisely what is intended and desired. That is to say, intracrural, oral and manual masturbatory sex are not seen in any way as commensurable substitutes for anal sex, although oral and manual masturbatory sex, in which case *gays work* the men, are by all accounts the most frequent form of local homosexual activity. An older *gay* from the *gimba* (rural hinterlands), said that amongst the older generation of *bantut*, if a *bantut* only performed oral or intercrural sex, they would be laughed at by other *bantut*. As I discuss below (chapters 6 and 7), not only is first anal intercourse represented to be both a confirmation and realization of one's *gay* gender identity, but also it is linked to the way in which *gays* conceive of *true love* relations with men.

While sex between two *gays*, or anal penetration of a boyfriend or *service/call boy* (a male prostitute) by a *gay* is not unheard of (see chapter 7), most of the local *gays* I knew said that it was rare and responded to the suggestion in one or more of several ways. In regards to two *gays* having sex, most find repulsive the idea that one would have sex with their *own kind*. When I told them that homosexuality in the United States and Great Britain is not primarily about men who feel they are women having sexual-romantic relations with men, but real men having sexual-romantic relations with real men, exchanging both penetrated and penetrating sexual roles, they were very surprised and most *gays* articulated an aversion to what they saw as in some way unnatural. These are, what would be in the local *swardspeak* (*gay* slang) termed *pong-piyang* (incestuous *gays*), and most *gays* quickly respond, *Ay! Subay sunugun!* "They should be burned".

This kind of activity was said to be typical of Manila where a *gay* from the provinces may be taken unaware by cosmopolitan *gays*. A *gay* friend who grew up in Jolo but now lives in Manila told me, for instance, that it is quite common for *gays* living in Manila to be sexually involved and exchanging penetrating/penetrated roles, although he said that he personally found it repulsive. He said he would only ever have sex with a *real man*. Similarly to penetrate one's boyfriend *gays* said, was like making him a woman. Thus, as one *gay* responded to the question put to her in a beauty contest, "If you found out your boyfriend was also *gay*, would you keep him as your

boyfriend?" "No, because I don't want to eat my own ass!"

Moreover, the idea of sex between two *real men* is seen as being disgusting. For a man to have sex - anal intercourse (*nagjubul*) - with a *gay* in theory does not diminish his status as a real man, so long as he plays the penetrating role. However, if a man approaches another man or a *gay* and asks to be penetrated, his masculinity is questioned and, particularly if he has wife and children, is commonly said to be a *silahis* or a *double blade*. A *silahis*, however, is not what in Great Britain or North America would otherwise be termed a bi-sexual. Bi-sexuality in my understanding designates a person who desires sexual relations with women and men no matter what part or role they are seen to play with the homosexual partner. By contrast, in the local understanding, a *silahis* is a *real man*, but who also desires to be penetrated: thus, bi-sexual in the sense of penetrating like a man, and being penetrated like a woman.

This is illustrated by the story Ernie told of a man in one community who was married with children. One night he approached Ernie and indicated that he wanted to have sex with him. This did not appear to be an unusual request or at least when Ernie first told me about it, it seemed to be an accepted (by *gays*) although not broadcast practise for a man to seek sexual favours from a *gay*. However, the man then began to pull his pants down and indicate that Ernie should penetrate him. As Ernie related the story to me, he could not bring himself to do it, and being frightened of the man, told him that he would go get his friend, another *gay* living in the same community, to have sex with him. He did go to tell his friend about the incident but neither of them, according to Ernie, returned to the man. In their understanding, the man was asking them to play the male role, while he would play the female role. As a result among the *gays* who knew of this event there remained a big question as to whether or not this man is actually a *closet queen* and *double blade* because whilst he is married and has a family he also desires to be penetrated.

I have heard several different variations of similar stories, which often involve married men with children who desired to be penetrated. It is these men who are

most often the source of widespread gossip, both among *gays* and more generally amongst both men and women. For example, I was leaving a coffee shop in Jolo one morning when a friend who was with me whispered, "*silahis*", and proceeded to tell me that the owner of the coffee shop, while having been the father of six children, also had many boyfriends. He told me to smell my hand, as the owner had previously shaken my hand in greeting. "See, it smells just like a woman", my friend said. The bemusing thing for my friend, however, was not this expression of femininity nor the fact of his boyfriends, but rather that he was also at the same time a married man. As one *gay* explained it, "There are also some men who are not *gay*, but they want to be penetrated. It's like *impossible*, they are not *gay*, so why do they want to be penetrated?"

As I suggested in the introduction, the category *silahis*, is a good example of the way in which gender protocols may be differentially employed in practise. In contrast to the terms *bantut* and *gay*, for instance, I never heard anyone openly refer to themselves or be referred to in their presence as a "*silahis*". Rather the term was always used in the context of making statements about, or calling into question, another persons character. Indeed, if the *bantut* are sometimes seen as being "*baisan*"- in a state of sexual desire or excitement- *silahis* are seen as being potentially dangerous, not simply indiscreet, but indiscriminate- "*basta-basta*". Thus, for instance, the owner of the coffee shop I referred to above who was not only a local politician accused of corruption, but also a *bisaya*' (a non-Muslim or Christian Filipino) courted by local Christian Filipino marines.

Another example was one *gay* from a very wealthy and powerful family in Jolo, who was almost universally called a *silahis* by the *gays* in the parlours. A very flamboyant figure, I had first seen him singing at one of the night spots in Zamboanga. Later in Jolo, I was relating our introduction to some of my *gay* friends, and told them that I was hoping to get to know him better. Their immediate response when I mentioned his name, was to look at each other knowingly and say, "*Silahis! Pong-piyang! Subay sunungun*"- He is a "double blade", he should be burned. They went on to explain that he had previously been married and had

children, but was now divorced. Then they told me that I should be careful because he was a mean and cruel person who if he didn't like someone would have them killed. On another occasion, I was looking at some snapshots of past *gay* parties with a friend, and I noticed a picture of this particular *gay*. I asked him if he was friends with the *gay*, and his reply was, "I only invited him so he wouldn't bear hard feelings toward me. He has a disagreeable attitude, besides he's a *silahis*."

Like the category *kinaidos*, the category *silahis* only ever emerged in the interstices, as an element of local *tsimosos* (gossip), the focus of which could either be *gay-bantut* or straight. As I indicated above, however, it is only by attempting to map the protocols within which these terms are defined that one can understand their force in practical employment. Gossip concerning a *silahis* would be meaningless if what one understood by that did not in some way contravene the expected set of relations which underlay the local gender protocols through which a person was defined and achieved status.

The wider point then is that as is the case with the *xanith* (transgender-homosexual men) in Oman described by Unni Wikan (1977), sexual roles are locally considered to be not just symbolic indicators of but critical to the realization of gender. Real men are defined, in the first instance, not by who their sexual partners are, but by the position they assume in sexual relations: that is by the demonstrated ability to be sexual penetrators. Women on the other hand are defined as receptors. *Gays*, like the *xanith*, are considered and consider themselves to be like women then not just because they dress and wear make up like women but also because like women they are penetrated by men (note). It is the *silahis* who, in terms of sexual roles at least, blurs the distinction commonly drawn between male and female sexuality. However, this is not all there is to be said about *gay/bantut* sexuality and there are other important if less straightforward and more contested (by the *gays*) aspects to local understandings of *bantut* sexuality and gender.

5.4 The symbolic circumscription of *gay/bantut* engenderment.

Quite early into my field work I was talking to a small group of married men and women and I raised the question about what it meant to be a real *bantut* (*bantut tuud*). The whole group laughed and one of the women said, "a *bantut* is one who cannot have children". When I pursued this further, the oldest of the men said that he would have to wait until the women left to explain, at which point the women excused themselves one by one and left. When the women had left, the eldest man of the group, motioning with his finger told me that a *bantut* was a man who could not penetrate a woman because his penis would become soft. As I continued to ask different people this definition emerged as a basic or reflexive understanding: A *bantut* is a man who is sexually impotent in some way, that is they are either said to have a small penis or are unable to have or sustain an erection. Thus, they cannot penetrate woman, cannot have children, and cannot sexually satisfy a wife (see also Moore 1981; Kiefer 1967:107).⁴

That impotence is the critical defining factor of the "real *bantut*" is seen in several instances. Impotence is seen as being grounds for divorce, also reported by Kiefer (personal communication 1991), and I heard of several cases - including one man who was married and divorced three times, each time with the accusation that he was a *bantut*. As several married men told me, "you can't tell if a person is a real *bantut* until they are married," and as I noted above, unmarried men who show no inclination of getting married (*subul liyaunan*) may also be suspected *bantuts*. When I was telling some male friends that I would be interviewing a *bantut* who later got married and had children, they all told me to ask if the man was really impotent previously. That way I could tell if he was a real *bantut*, and if so I could find out by what means he was cured. Otherwise, he probably was just pretending to be a *bantut*.

Moreover, when I asked women what defined the *bantut* (and contrary to what might have been expected given the example above, women did in some instances speak openly about sexuality) they explicitly told me, usually with a great deal of laughter,

that they are impotent men who have small penises. They also told me that women are able to render normally potent men temporarily impotent, *makapamantut*, through the use of special *ilmu*' either by wearing amulets making them invulnerable or through *bassahun* - words of power, which the majority of married women I have talked to say they have.

I have previously noted the importance of amulets in connection with rendering one invulnerable in battle. Similarly the use of an amulet by a woman can render her impenetrable, and this was commonly acknowledged by men. One man related the following story, about the time when his father was temporarily turned into a *bantut*:

After my father's wedding ceremony and all the necessary celebrations, my father went to my mother and they ritually greeted each other (*nagsalam*; see below). He was about to take her, but suddenly he became soft and he was unable to penetrate her. He became very afraid, and thought that he might be a *bantut*. So he tried again to get close to her, but again he was unable to penetrate her. Then his wife remembered her amulet. She was wearing a *buku*' (a specially knotted cord) around her waist which made her impenetrable, so my father could not penetrate her. Only when she took off the *buku*' was my father able to penetrate her.

Other types of *ilmu*' such as the *bassahun* or *tawal* (water that has been infused with power) are used in cases where a woman's husband is going away on a trip and may be tempted to go to prostitutes, or when she suspects that her husband is having an affair with a mistress (*nagkabit* or *nagsideline*). Most women, in fact, seemed to take special delight in relating these stories about their ability to make men, and their husbands in particular, impotent, if only temporarily. As one woman told me, "if my husband gets close to another woman, his penis will only go soft."

Men, whilst acknowledging their wife's power, tended to down play this would be threat to their potency, often suggesting that, in any case, one could always find an *ilmu*' that was stronger. However, men's apparent nonchalance about their wives ability to make them impotent belies a much wider anxiety amongst them about masculinity and sexual potency. Men are valorized as inseminators, and although there is, in general, an anticipation that persons born with male genitals will become

inseminators, this is not a taken-for-granted assumption. Rather, the progression into manhood is marked, and in important respects is seen only to be brought about, by circumcision (*pagIslam*) and the transmission of the *ilmu' pagkausug* (the knowledge-power of masculinity).

As I elaborate in more detail below (see Chapter 6 and see also Kiefer 1972b) these transformational practises which complete the masculinization of young men are focused primarily on, as they are indexed in, the body: its strength, hardness, invulnerability, and sexual potency. Moreover, it is only through repeated "testings", including sexual adventures, that one's masculinity is revealed and in the process realized. The point here is that the *bantut* are, in the first instance, defined as unrealized men, whose position as the penetrated partner is understood to be a corollary of their penial impotency.

For their part, although *gays* said they were not aroused by women (the word for arousal and erection, *latugan*, one and the same word) *gays* resist (unlike the South Asian *hijra*) the suggestion that they are as men in any way physically deficient or incapacitated, drawing a distinction between men who are impotent (*bayug*) and men, like themselves, who felt they were women (*gay/bantut*). *Gays* in fact sometimes celebrated *gay* who were said to have particularly large genitals and frequently discussed the characteristics of handsome men who gave them strong erections. The point is that whilst both *gays* and other persons were generally agreed about the *gay/bantut* were the sexually penetrated partners, the *gay/bantut* did not attribute this to impotence, but to their desire to be treated like women.

Impotence, however, is only one side of the symbolic equation within which the *bantut* are conventionally engendered, and within which *bantut* sexuality is constructed and circumscribed. If sexual potency is a primary concern in the growing up of young men, a second and closely related concern is with the treatment of semen. This is not, as might be expected, articulated in terms of the loss of potency and male vitality, although one might well infer this, given the fact that semen is seen to be fundamentally invested with life force. Rather, it is primarily articulated in

terms of where semen is ejaculated.

This was highlighted in a particularly graphic way by a middle age man who related to me what he had observed in the *ff* or *fighting fish beta* (x-rated video shows). He narrated a scene in which a man ejaculated onto a woman's body, describing in detail how the woman rubbed it over her body and breasts. He then went on to tell me that while he found the beta's erotic and exciting he also found the indiscriminate treatment of semen by the men and women horrifying. Semen, he said, belonged inside a woman's body. I then asked about masturbation, which I knew not only to be an otherwise generally accepted activity amongst young men, but also, as with other bodily *testings*, thought to increase the strength and hardness of the body and the penis in particular. He told me, as did other men, that while of course young men frequently masturbated, this was not, strictly speaking, treating life-substance, which was made and created by Allah, with due care and respect.

A tension emerges, between, on the one hand, male bodies which are valorized as penetrating inseminators, and, on the other hand, the dissipation of vital substance: that is, not just the wasteful, but the potentially polluting and dangerous dispersion of life-substance. There is a conjunction here, moreover, between the more strictly Islamic sense of ritual impurity brought about by contact with bodily fluids outside of or on the surface of the body, and the sensibilities more particular to local persons concerning life force and human soul substance which, in its disembodied state, is regarded as an ambivalent power (cf. Endicott 1970:53-56). As I noted previously (Chapter 3), semen ejaculated in masturbation may, according to some persons, become disembodied potentially malign spirits. Thus, this vital and dangerous substance must be deposited in women's bodies, which, in addition to themselves possessing life substance (although it is not regarded as strong as mens), are primarily valorized as the receptacles and passageways within and through which the potentially polluting vital substance are purified and rendered socially productive.

This symbolic valorization of female bodies is evident amongst other places, in mythological accounts (*usulan*), a primary example of which is the account of *Nabi*

Adam and *Sitti' Hawa* (Adam and Eve) (cf. Jainal et. al. 1974, for one published variant). *Nabi Adam* (who is said to be the root or source, *puun*, of all mankind) is created by Allah and, being both an exceptionally well-endowed and extremely potent man, he goes about fucking large holes (*luwag*) in the ground. The angels then complain to Allah that Adam is polluting the earth, who instructs them to circumcise Adam. Adam however is invulnerable and only after a special word and with a special knife provided by Allah, are they able to cut him. Thus, he is circumcised and rendered Islam. However, there is as yet, no abatement in Adam's desire or his propensity for polluting behaviour. Rather, it is not until God creates Eve and they have sexual intercourse that he is rendered with her in a state of ritual purity (*junub iban istinja'*).

This mytheme of purifying woman, and the metaphorical transformation of earth and women (as mother), is found not only in mythology, but in the everyday language of gender and sexuality. The vagina, for instance, is only rarely referred to directly and is usually only spoken of as *lawang*, the door, entryway or threshold of the house. However, the term door is more than simply a convenient euphemism for describing the vagina. Rather, it is central to the way in which women, and women as mothers, in particular, are symbolically gendered and sacralized.

It is mothers more so than fathers that are seen as having grown up children, and it is to one's mother that one is said to be bound most closely, since it is from her that one has received the gift of life as a *remembrance* (*panumtuman*). Thus, whilst as one local saying has it, "Father and mother are the one's we treat as god on earth" ("*Ama' iban ina' in patuhananta ha dunya*"), another saying attributed to the *Hadith* (traditions or sayings attributed to Muhammad), "Heaven is to be found at the feet of one's mother." Moreover, according to the teachings of the *kamaasan* (forbears) if a person does not receive forgiveness and acceptance (*ampun*) from one's mother, then at death mother's milk will flow from all of their bodily orifices. As the local axiom has it, *hambuuk hadja in lawang*, there is only one door or threshold. The door which a man penetrates in sexual intercourse, is the same door through which he has been birthed. Further, the very same door through which one enters life is

also the door through which one passes at death, a direct homology drawn with internment in the earth and passage through the door of the mother. Life flows through women, who are rendered as sacred passageways, from heaven to earth and back again.

Further, not only is sexual intercourse referred to as *sulga' dunya* (heaven on earth), but also women's bodies, the vagina in particular, is, in some instances spoken of, in terms of Islamic ideology, as the most sacred of places. An example of this is in the ritual greeting, *salam*, with which a bride and groom are supposed to greet each other on the night on which they consummate their marriage: the following *salam* was related to me by a local Tausug *pakil* (ritual specialist, in this case a man).

When the man goes to his wife he takes her hand in his and they touch their thumbs together (*nagbakul lima*). Then he greets her, "*Asalamu Walaikum*". And the woman answers back, "*Walaikum Mussalam*".

Then when the man comes to lie down beside the bed of the woman she asks him the following questions:

Babai: Mayta' kaw nakakari pa daig ku?

Woman: Why have you come to be by my side?

Usug: Asawa ta kaw.

Man: I will make you my wife.

Babai: Mayta' kaw nagasawa. Dain diin kaw limabay?

Woman: Why will you make me your wife? Which way have you come? (How have you come to be here?)

Usug: Dain ha kug iban baya'. Iban dain ha lindu' iban randam.

Man: From/through my will and desire. And from/through my feelings of love.

Later when they are lying together whatever of the woman's body the man touches, the woman asks of him certain questions.

When he touches her breast she asks, "*Unu in ulinan mu yan?* What are you touching there?"

The man replies, "*pundu'-pundu' sin jakhum*," the nipple of the forbidden fruit.

When he touches her vagina, she asks again,
"Unu in ulinan mu yan? What are you touching there?"

The man replies, "*Lawang Kaaba*"- the door of the Kaaba. (The black stone and centre of the Islamic world in Mecca towards which Muslims face in prayer)

After that, whatever they do is ok. Everyone who gets married does this. Even those who elope."

Undoubtedly, the *pakil*'s representation of the *salam* as being something which everyone does is exaggerated and in fact a matter of no little comment amongst older persons who often suggested that the younger generation had completely disregarded the teachings of the forbears (*kamaasan*). Some, in fact, suggested that it was precisely because of this that the number of *gay/bantut* men had increased. This symbolic inscription of women's bodies as being not just the receptacle but the most sacred of passageways is central to the way in which women are locally objectified as the guardians and keepers of familial or ancestral identity, as well as local ethnic-religious identity (see chapter 9 below). More immediately, however, it also has important implications for the way in which *bantut* sexuality is locally engendered.

I have already noted that playing the receptive role in anal intercourse is a key aspect of *bantut* engenderment- gender being critically linked to the penetrated/penetrator roles in sexual intercourse. However, there are several interjectory points to be made in this respect. The first is that the *bantut* are not, contrary to what might be expected, regarded as the passive sexual partner. Rather, they are often seen as sexual aggressors. Secondly, whilst Muslim Tausug/Sama men (young men in particular) will, as I elaborate in more detail below (chapters 6 & 7), talk about being fellated and/or masturbated by the *bantut*, there is an almost universal denial of anal intercourse.

Significantly, it is not simply a generalized other who the *bantut* are said to engage in intercourse, but the *Bisaya*' - a covering term for all non-Muslim, Christian Filipinos (see also Moore 1981 and Nimmo 1978 who respectively report ethnically

exogamous sexual relations amongst Tausug *bantut* in Zamboanga and Sama transvestite-homosexuals in Sitangki, Sulu). In fact, the only men I was able to straightforwardly talk to about sexual liaisons with *gays* which involved anal intercourse were non-Muslim Christian Filipino *callboys* (male prostitutes) in Zamboanga, who talked quite freely and openly about fucking the *bantut* or *bakla'* (the Tagalog cognate of the Tausug and Sinama *bantut*). Moreover, although the *gays* (for whom anal intercourse is a significant part of their transgenderal identities) tell a slightly different story, they also noted the reluctance of local Muslim men to engage in and especially, to openly admit to having anal intercourse.

The aversion to anal intercourse is expressed by Tausug and Sama men in the strongest possible terms, and is likened to their revulsion at eating pork; that is, the desire to regurgitate. Moreover, according to some persons, the only possible way for someone who has engaged in anal intercourse to have one's body cleansed and be accepted by God is to sincerely repent (*nagtawbat*) and to ingest a specially prepared mixture of earth and water, which is also the same procedure necessary for persons who have ingested pork. According to other persons, however, although one can purify the body from pork which was unwittingly eaten, no amount of repentance (*tawbat*) and no amount of purificatory medicine (*tawal*) can purify persons who have engaged in sodomy.

Sexual relations between two men, specifically anal intercourse, sexual relations with the dead, and incest are generally seen as being the three most heinous sexual sins in local Islamic understanding. Thus, because of their association with anal intercourse the *bantut* are commonly regarded to be not only *malummuh*, vulgar, but also, in local folk Islamic theology, *baldusa*, grave or unforgivable sinners. Other expressions used in reference to the *bantut* were "*hanig narka*" or "*sumping-sumping narka*" (hells kindling, the flowers of hell). Just as importantly, however, in terms of local theology, the *bantut*, like all *baldusa* (grave or unforgivable sinners), are said to immediately become ghost (T, *lutaw*/ S, *panguwa'*) when they die. As one person put it, a *bantut* buried at 4 p.m. (before sundown) is already out and haunting by 6 p.m.

In fact, shortly after I began field work in Jolo, a *gay* beautician died, and was said to be haunting both her own and neighbouring areas where she lived. The ghost was said to be particularly brave (*maisug*), and one of my immediate neighbours asked me one morning if I had heard any commotion the previous night. He then went on to explain that a ghost had attempted to enter their house. Although he had not actually seen the ghost he said there was a terrible odour, like the smell of rotting flesh, which had filled his house, and he told me that I should be on my guard the next night. A few days later, a child died of an unknown cause, and when the parents examined the body, they discovered several red streaks on the child's back which they later explained to me as being the hand-print of the ghost.

Ghosts are not simply disembodied spirits but zombies or the living dead, whose rotting bodies the earth rejects. According to some, a *saytan* (evil spirit) enters the body of the deceased, while others say that it is simply that the earth has rejected the deceased because of their sins or because they were not buried properly. While there is a variety of opinions on the exact nature of "ghosts", the physical descriptions of them are almost all the same; that is, of a decayed and rotting corpse which walks with its chin resting on one shoulder so their jaw will not hang open. Its frightening visual presence (which it apparently has the ability to conceal), however, is only outdone by the nauseating stench - the one sure sign of a ghost - which cannot be hidden or disguised.

The point is that sodomy (with which the *bantut* are associated) is seen both as a desecration and an inversion of women's bodies which are, as I have indicated, symbolically associated with the earth and fecundity and which are valorized as the most sacred of passageways through which life flows. As Kiefer notes (1972b:36), and as I was also told, sodomy is said to bring drought and disaster to the land and misfortune and retribution from one's forbears (*makabulsit* / *makabusung*). Moreover, although sodomy is primarily associated with the *bantut*, heterosexual sodomy is similarly seen as polluting. As one man replied in response to my query about anal intercourse with one's wife, "Why would you want to spill your sperm in there as all that comes out is shit. It's just like the *bantut*!" In summary, what

emerges from the conventional reading is that the *bantut* are considered to be, on the one hand, unrealized - that is impotent - men, and on the other hand, not just unrealizable, but defiled and defiling women: *bantut* bodies (their flaccid penis and defiling anus) read, and constructed, as mutually constituting ciphers of socially transgressive and unproductive sexuality.

5.4 Neither Man/Nor Woman? Further notes on *gay/bantut* engenderment.

What I have outlined above may be taken to represent the underlying framework or protocols within which the *bantut* are locally engendered. However, there are several further points which must be made. The "definition" of the "real" *bantut* as impotent men and false women resonates in many respects with what has been more widely reported from Borneo and Central Indonesia. Early observers referred to the Ngaju *basir* of Kalimantan as "sterile/ unfruitful/ impotent" men who dress like women (Murray 1992a:258), whilst Van der Kroef (1954:259) adds that the *basir* was fully expected to act like a woman, "in every way, also sexually" noting that failure to act homosexually placed the *basir* in an inferior position. Sutlive (1992) describes the Iban *manang bali* as cowardly or unrealized men, who as part of their transformation into shaman take on women's apparel. Similarly the *bajasa* of the Bare's Toradja in Sulawesi are described by Van der Kroef (1954: 259) as "deceivers" who, because of cowardice and the abandonment of men's warlike pursuits, were required to wear women's clothing.

As Van der Kroef (1954:263) notes in his early article, there is in each of these cases a clear religious and ritual link, and he suggests that neither homosexuality nor transvestism in this part of the world can be understood apart from this. The same holds true, according to Nanda (1986; 1990), for the South Asian *hijra* who are considered not only to be impotent - that is, biologically deficient, intersexed or emasculated - men, but also to be men who are like women - that is men who adopt aspects of female behaviour (including sexual roles) as well as female dress. The *hijra* are religious devotees to *Bachura Mata*, a Hindu mother goddess, and who, if not otherwise hermaphrodites, undergo emasculation as part of their initiation into the

hijra community. Nanda argues that the *hijra* may best be understood not as a category of transgenderal homosexuals, but, in keeping with Hindu cosmology and their ritual position, as an androgynously engendered, intermediate third gender category.

Such a comparative cosmological and religious perspective, is clearly important for elucidating the wider system of signs within which the local understanding of *bantut* gender and sexuality is located and has taken shape. This is evident both in the respective symbolic gendering of men's and women's bodies outlined above, and in the relationship between marriage, the completion of the growing up of socially recognized adult men and women, and the symbolic separation (through gift exchange) of incestuous siblings, a central metaphor common to many groups in the region (Errington 1987, 1990).

As noted previously, according to local mythology the world is populated by, and divided into, successive generational sibling layers who are ultimately said to be descendants of the incestuous relationship of Apu Adam's and Sitti' Hawa's (Adam and Eve's) children, who in some versions are referred to as twins. This cosmological understanding of human inter-relationship is replicated in the customs and traditions (*adat*) surrounding marriage transactions (*pagpangasawa*) and the marriage ritual (*pahalal kawin*), which amongst other things, are concerned with incest (*sumbang*).⁵

At one level, the term *sumbang* simply references both prohibited marriage and sexual partners. This follows the general pattern of relations in other parts of the centrist archipelago: in most instances allowing, and in some instances encouraging, first cousin marriage, although patrilateral parallel cousin marriage is generally seen to be hot and potentially dangerous (*mapasu'*), if politically advantageous. Cross-generational marriages, on the other hand, at least within the kindred, are, theoretically at least, prohibited (cf. Errington 1987: 412-413). At another level, however, the term *sumbang* is used to reference the common ancestry of persons in the incestuous relation of Adam and Eve's twin children. As several elder men

expressed it, "*Awn hadja lawang hikasumbang magtaymanghud* - the only doors are those of incestuous relationships between siblings." Viewed from this perspective, the transactions surrounding marriage, like the marriage ritual itself (*pahalal kawin*) are seen as the essential process both through which the sibling relationship is removed and through which a marital relation, an alliance, to employ Levi-Strauss' (1969) terms, is instated. Children produced outside of such a relation, are either referred to as *biyarat* (where the child's father is known) or *halam biyarat* (where the child's father is not known), which might be literally translated as the children of incestuous relationships.

The marriage transactions move through several stages. First, is the division into two opposing groups (*magusbawaris*, literally to make or become two kin groups) which is initiated at the formal *pagpangasawa* (formal request for marriage). These two groups (*maas han sipak*, elders on opposing sides) are composed of the bilateral kindred of the man (*usba*) and the bilateral kindred of the woman (*waris*) each group respectively further divided into father's bilateral kin (*usba*) and mother's bilateral kin (*waris*). Technically it is the *usba* of either side which negotiates the marriage transactions; the woman's father's kindred in charge of deciding the amount and kind of bridewealth, *ungsud*, to be requested and the man's father's kindred ultimately responsible for raising the said amount. However, not only does the *usba* and *waris* kin from both sides contribute, and benefit, from the negotiations and proceedings, but they do so united, in their opposition to the other party, as the *usba* of the groom and *waris* of the bride respectively.

That is to say, the division into opposing groups which allows for (as it makes necessary) the transaction through which the groups are bound together through the handing over of the bride/bridewealth, instantiate and valorize a particular identity between a woman's kindred and a man's kindred with respect to the future children of the couple. The woman's kindred are now become a unitary *waris* - the maternal kindred of the couples children - and the man's kindred are now become a unitary *usba* - the paternal kindred of the couples children, the internal division or duality of *usba* and *waris* collapsed within the new alignment.

The continual separation and reuniting of groups, amongst other things, ensures not just the ongoing circulation of wealth both within and between groups, but the continued reproduction and interaction of affinally linked groups, which might otherwise tend towards a situation of centripetal endogamous stagnation given the preference of many Tausug, and some Sama, for first cousin marriage: incest (*sumbang*) at once inscribing and circumscribing the end of social action and circumventing and inventing the means by which social life is continued (see Levi-Strauss 1969; Errington 1987:432 *passim*). But while the meaning of *sumbang* is partially apprehended by demonstrating the structural utility of the continual partition and reconnection of social groups, in order to understand this process more fully it is necessary to explore the implications of incest and marriage for gender.

The *usba* (the groom's bilateral kindred) are metaphorical inseminators for the *waris* (bride's bilateral kindred). Although never expressly stated as such, it would seem to be symbolically encoded in the notion of *bang makagaus* (if you have the capacity or ability), which, addressed as a question from the *waris* (woman's kin) to the *usba* (man's kin), challenges both the character of their intent (*maksud*) and their ability to satisfy the bride-wealth demands: a question in short whether they are men enough to meet the demands of the woman and her kindred. The *waris* (woman's bilateral kin), on the other hand, like the bride, are seen as the passageways through which the bridewealth, like semen, flows and is transformed, blooms, blossoms and rises, the same term used of the growing up of children (*pasulig*) which is used in reference to the growth of plants and to the yeast used in cooking.

Indeed, in the wedding transactions, it is the *waris* (woman's bilateral kin) who through their productive activity transforms the money given by the *usba* (man's bilateral kin) into the feast day celebrations. Similarly, the unworked gold given by the *usba* (man's side) as part of the bridewealth is taken by the *waris* (woman's side) to the goldsmith where it is made into a complete set of gold jewellery for the bride. This the woman keeps as her own wealth (*suku' babai*) and is passed down as remembrances and inheritances, *pusaka'* to the couples children, who themselves are referred to as *panumtuman umbul satu*, the greatest remembrances. This finally, is

the return the *waris* (woman's side) makes to the *usba* (man's side), transposing what was potentially simply an asymmetric hierarchical relation, into a complimentary and mutually encompassing relation: the couples' children a **joint** remembrance of their *pangkat* (forbears).

There are several points I wish to draw out of this. First, it is not simply that these processes (as in other domains such as the household, where the woman is theoretically the gatekeeper of family finances) are constructed in terms of complimentary gender categories, but rather that it is only in and through these marital transactions, both for the couple, as for their respective kindreds, that gender is revealed and realized. In this respect marriage completes, just as it is seen to begin, another process in the growing up persons. Moreover, it is not that marriage fixes gender once and for all, but that it marks the entry of adult persons into the transactional world through which gender is enacted. As the *usba* - *waris* transformation suggests, at different moments and with respect to different contexts, persons like groups, who are themselves multiply authored entities (Strathern 1988), may alternately express different gender aspects. In fact, as several midwives (*panday*) told me, when a child is born one does not immediately say whether the child is a boy or a girl, but rather, will reply to the parents, Muhammad, Fatima, Muhammad. This is, they said, to signal the fact that the child contains elements of both their father and their mother.

Second, these processes are crucial to the way in which socially reproductive and socially unproductive and potentially dangerous sexuality are engendered, and which in the local sexual economy are as significant, if not more so, than the question of, "who is penetrating who"? On the one hand, socially reproductive sexuality is sexuality encompassed within the reciprocal gifting and mutual obligations of marital partners and just as importantly their kindreds. Socially unproductive sexuality, on the other hand, is sexuality which remains unencompassed or outside of this reciprocal gifting relationship - the latter of which includes not only homosexuality (including lesbian relations), but also pre-marital sexuality, extra-marital sexuality and commoditized sexuality. Thus, for instance, whilst one's masculinity may be

demonstrated outside of conventional sexuality, it is only in and through its reciprocally encompassed form that it is socially validated.

The point for the *gay/bantut*, is that not only are they constructed in the local protocols as persons who do not, and, more fundamentally, cannot enter into a marital relation, but also that they are excluded from those social transactions through which gender difference is enacted and validated. There are, however, several ways in which this might be read. Placed within the wider context of local cosmology, the *bantut* might be understood, like the incestuous siblings of origin myths, as the very picture of *sumbang* (zero-degree sibling coitus and marriage), a metaphor for ancestral potency and the unbroken unity of the *usbawaris* social unit, the kindred and the house. As Errington (1989:213) suggests of the transvestite Buginese *bissu*:

Beings [or objects] that are sexually ambiguous, are considered potent, not so much because they combine or conflate the duality of sexes, but because they are as of yet pre-difference, they embody an unbroken unity."

In fact, as I have already noted, the *bantut* were, and still often are, performers at many wedding celebrations. Recognized masters of traditional dance (*pangalay*), they frequently perform during the liminal three day/night celebratory period (*paglingkud tu*) marking the transition between the symbolic removal of the sibling relation (between the couple as between groups) which is formally enacted during the marriage rite on the first day and the consummation of a new, or perhaps better, renewed relationship (between the couple as between groups), which officially begins on the fourth day. According to this logic, the *gay/bantut* figure both as the mythical ground, that is, the fundamental unity, out of which seemingly opposed elements are put into play in social transactions, and as the ideal of sibling unity towards which, marital partners and groups, theoretically, strive.

I shall have more to say about the ways in which gender ambiguity may be related to notions of spiritual power or potency, and, in particular, how this potentially informs the *bantut* as the embodiments of beauty and American *istyle*. At the same time, as I have made clear from the outset, and as the conventional view of the *bantut*

as a defiled/defiling version of masculine and feminine sexuality demonstrates (associated as it is with Christian Filipino's and the desecration of Islam), the engenderment of the *bantut* does not simply conform to an ahistorical cultural logic. Rather it has emerged as one part of the ongoing negotiation and transformation of local identity, the longer history of which I have dealt with at length in the preceding section. More particularly, as I argue below (Chapter 10), the increasing valorization and crystallization of the *bantut* (in Sulu at least) not just as an intermediate or indeterminate third gender category, but specifically as a category of impotent men and defiled/defiling women, has occurred within the context of recent historical events and in particular the repressive state political violence following on the rise of separatist MNLF's (Moro National Liberation Front) movement in the 1970's.

Finally, however, my interest is not simply with the way in which the *bantut* have been constructed as mediatory figures in the negotiation of local identity, but also in the way in which *gays* negotiate their own place and identity, both within and at times moving beyond local conventions: the term *gay* marking both a specific attempt by *gays* to distanciate themselves from their objectification as the embodiment of socially transgressive and unproductive sexuality, and more positively, their claims to, and appropriation of, a socially validated status-identity as persons with a feminine identity. More specifically, the term *gay* signals an attempt to create an identity with an imagined *gay* universe, which like beauty is defined primarily in terms of America (and by idioms drawn from America). However, it is clear that what is locally understood by the *gays* about *gay* identity is not the same as it is in America. Rather the use of the term *gay* signals their own transgenderally defined projects: a project which is signalled (see chapter 7 below), amongst other ways, in the intentionalities *gays* express in the relationships, both real and imagined, which they have with men, and in which "America" figures, in *gay* imaginations, as the site of "true love". As will become apparent, there is a paradoxical conjunction here between *gay* intentionalities, for whom America represents the potential realization of their transgenderally defined identities, and their wider position as mediatory figures in the negotiation of local identity.

Endnotes.

1. Given what I have argued about the position of the *gay/bantut* 'betwixt and between' their own and a cultural 'other' it is perhaps not all that coincidental that they should have been put forward, and put themselves forward, to help me.
2. I never pressed the issue with Joseph as I was told that his father had once become angry at him for "*magbantut-bantut*"- acting like a *bantut* and this did not seem to be an open topic of discussion. When I later told him that my research was to be focused on the "*gays*", he expressed great interest, but his interest was always cast in terms of the "*causes*" of homosexuality, whether it was biological, psychological or cultural. I never knew if Joseph was or was not *gay*, but I did have other friends who did not openly present themselves as "*gay*" but who confided to me the anxiety they felt about being *gay* because they knew that their friends were saying they were *gay/bantut* behind their back. They felt that they could not "*come out*" because they did not want to be thought of in the same way as the other *gays* or other *bantut*, for reasons which will become apparent. The point I simply wish to make here is that while, as most casual observers have pointed out (Whitham 1992), being *gay* is generally not problematic in the Philippines, there are those individuals who do find the categories problematic.
3. Real men, *bantut*, *gay*, *silahis* together with the *bantut-bantut* are the main categories of males, and before I explore the major categories of females I would just note that what follows below is most generally concerned with "*gays*" like Ernie, that is *gays* who represent themselves and are generally considered *bantut* or *gay*. There are commonly recognized categories or degrees of *bantut* or *bantut-bantut* although the categories are usually blurred.
4. Moore (1981:308) reports a similar distinction made by her Tausug women informants. "In terms of sexual focus there are two kinds of *bantut*--one who initially engages primarily in homosexual activity, but who at marriage becomes exclusively heterosexual (although some women had reservations about the exclusivity) and one who never becomes heterosexual. The distinction is entirely anatomical. The first category, whose "*part*" (penis) is not *bantut* are capable of marrying and assuming traditional male roles, but the latter group whose part is also *bantut* are not. Such men do not marry and more importantly do not fight.
5. The discussion of *sumbang* (incest) and *pahalal kawin* (marriage ritual) which I present here in part derives from discussions with two older men, part of the transcribed text of which I reproduce in Appendix A.



Figure 5.1 and 5.2 (Above) Ernie, my first *true gay* informant and his brother, Jimmy (sometime Ms. Czechoslovakia), who was also *gay*. (Below) Author with Ernie on his graduation from the Ateneo de Zamboanga, with a B.S Nursing. When I left the field he was preparing to take his state board exams and wanted to work abroad in Saudi Arabia. Note all the trophies displayed in the background behind Ernie, which he and Jimmy had won in previous *gay* beauty contests.



Chapter 6. Growing Up Gay: Narrative themes in Gay Life-Histories.

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I explore some of the recurring themes in *gay* life histories related to the process of growing up *gay*. What emerges from these narrative accounts is an emphasis not on sexuality, but on transgenderal feelings and expressions. These are expressed and realized primarily through a process of transformative appropriation: the appropriation of material culture, bodily postures and desires valorized as feminine and associated with an image of beauty and *istyle* (style). It is within this context that *gays* read or re-read their first experience of homosexuality, which is often referred to in terms of *testing*. In the final part of the chapter I outline some of the contours of *gay* life beyond their experience in childhood and adolescence, and look at some of the important differences and distinctions which might be drawn between, and are articulated by, younger and more mature *gays*.

The data for this chapter is primarily taken from 50 *gay* life-history interviews. However, many of the interviewees were *gays* with whom I frequently interacted more informally on an everyday basis in the beauty parlours, at school and at home (see Appendix B for details of interview structure and format), and I have sought to locate *gay* narratives within the larger processes and discourse surrounding the growing up and engenderment of children and adolescents. Table 6.1 provides a summary of some basic biographical details on their families, social backgrounds and living situations, to which I shall refer in this and subsequent chapters. My primary concern here, however, is not with socio-economic profiles or trajectories (although see Chapter 8 below), but rather with the way in which the making of *gays/bantut* are understood both by the *gays* themselves and by persons more generally. What emerges is a processual understanding of engenderment which exemplifies the point made, amongst others, by Butler (1990:140) who suggests that, "...gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylised repetition of acts."

TABLE 6.1: Summary of Some Biographical Data from Life-history Interviewees.

AGE	ETHNICITY	RELIGION	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	F OCCUPATION	M OCCUPATION	LIVING SITUATION	HOME EXPENSES	SUPPORTING FAMILY?
15	Tausug	Islam	Some High School*	Student	Lumber Yard	Teacher Elem.	Mother	Mother	No
17	F-Tausug	M-Visayan	Cath/Islam	Some High School*	Student	Teacher	Mother	Mother	No
17	M-Tausug	F-Visayan	Catholic	Some College*	Student	Soldier	Dormitory/Parents	Scholar	No
18	Visayan	Catholic	Some College*	Student	Mechanic	Housewife	Parents	Parents	No
18	Tausug	Islam	Some College*	Student	Fisherman	Housewife	Parents	Parents	No
19	Tausug	Islam	Some College*	Student	Buy-Sell Gold	Business	Parents	Parents	No
19	Tausug	Islam	BA ED	Unemployed	Business	Business	Parents	Parents	No
19	Tausug	Islam	Some College*	Student	Retired	Housewife/Sell	Parents	Parents	No
20	Tausug	Islam	Some College*	Student	City Council	Teacher	Mother	Parents	No
21	Tausug	Islam	AB Tourism	None	?	?	?	?	?
22	Visayan	Christian	Some College	Jewelry Bus.	Business	Storekeeper	Mother	Share/Moth	No
22	Tausug	Islam	BSE	Unemployed	Business	Housewife	Mother	Mother	No
22	Tausug	Islam	AB PSYCHOLOGY	Beautician	Imam	Housewife	Sister	Shared	No
23	Visayan	Catholic	Some College*	Student	Storekeeper	Businesswoman	Parents	Parents	No
23	Chinese-Tausug	Islam	Some College*	Student	Jeep Operator	Office Employ	Aunt	Aunt	No
23	Tausug	Islam	BS Maths	Beautician	Religious Lead	?	Aunt	Shared	Aunt In Home
24	Tausug	Islam	AB/BS Educ.	Radio Host	Barter Trader	Housekeeper	Parents	Parents	No
25	Tausug	Islam	Some College	Beautician	?	?	Parents	Parents	No
25	Tausug	Islam	BS Educ. BS Nurse	None/Graduate	Ret. Business	Small Business	Parents	Shared	Parents
25	Sama/Tausug	Islam	BS Educ.	Teacher		?	?	?	?
26	Tausug	Islam	Some High School	Beautician	Goldsmith	Housewife	Parents	Shared	No
26	Visayan	Christian	BS Educ.	Beautician	Farmer	Housewife	Brother	Brother	No
26	Chinese-Zambo	Christian	Some College	Design/Tailor	Rice Mill	Teacher Elem	Self	Self	Parents
27	Tausug	Islam	AB English	City Clerk	Postmaster	Teacher Elem	Mother	Shared	No
27	Tausug	Islam	Some College	Beautician	Farmer	Housewife	Mother	Shared	No
27	Zambo-Ilocano	Protestant	BS Accounting	Civil Serv	Mechanical Eng	Civil Servant	Boarding	Self	No
28	Tausug	Islam	BS Nursing	Pimp	?	?	Own/Partner	Self	No

AGE	ETHNICITY	RELIGION	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	F OCCUPATION	M OCCUPATION	LIVING SITUATION	HOME EXPENSES	SUPPORTING FAMILY?
28	Tausug	Christian	AB Educ.	Teacher	Baker	Housewife	Parents	Shared	No
29	Tausug	Islam	BS Educ.	Teacher	Vendor	Housewife	Parents	Parents	No
29	Tausug-Visayan	Christian	AB/BS Educ.	Teacher	Govt. Employee	Housewife	Mother	Share/Sist	No
30	Tausug/Sama?	Islam	High School	Parlour Owner	Trader	None			?
31	Tausug	Islam	BA Educ.	Beautician	Teacher	Housewife	Parents	Self	Parents
32	Tausug	Islam	BS Educ.	Parlour Owner	Soldier	Housewife	Parents/Parlour	Shared	Helps Sister
33	F-Tausug/M-Visayan	Catholic	Some HighSchool	Parlour Owner	Tailoring	Sari-Sari	Father	Self	Sister
37	Tausug	Islam	AB*	Student	Head Teacher	Teacher	Brother	Brother	No
37	F-Tausug/M-Zambo	Islam	BS Telecommun	Civil Servant	Goldsmith	Housewife	Brother/Sister	Self	Brother/Sister
38	Tausug-Maranao	Islam	AB History	Post Office	Barter Business	Housewife	Own W/Neph	Self	Neph-Boyfriend
39	Tausug	Islam	AB Educ.	Teacher	Head Teacher	Teacher	Brother	Self	To Brother
39	Tausug-Chinese	Protestant	Some HighSchool	Beautician	Store Owner	Housewife	Own Home	Self	No
39	Tausug	Islam	Some Elementary	Beautician	WWII Guerilla	Store	Mother	Self	Mother/Boy
45	M-Tausug/F-Chinese	Islam	Elementary	Parlour Owner	Police	Royal Family	Own	Self	Relatives
45	Chinese	Christian	BS Educ.	Hardware	Hardware Bus	Housewife	Family Home	Shared	Nephew/Neice
47	Tausug-Visayan	Catholic	AB Educ.	Teacher	Govt. Employee	None	Sister/Brother	Shared	Nephew
49	Tausug/Visayan/Chine	Catholic	Some College	Beautician	Govt. Auditor	None	Relatives	Self	No
50	Tausug	Islam	Some Elementary	Cinema Helper	?	Selling Market	Nephews/Neice	Self	"Boyfriends"
57	Tausug	Islam	Some Elementary	Gold Platter	Religious Guru	Housewife	Own	Self	No

6.2 *In Born*: The making of gays in early childhood.

Like the almost textbook language of transsexualism employed by *gays* in self-definition (see Chapter 5.1 above), when I asked, "When did you first realize you were *gay*?" *gays*, some of whom have read psychology in high school or college, commonly answered in terms of being either an *inborn* or *environmental gay*. However, the terms were used less to engage the nature/nurture debate than to indicate the point in their life-histories to which they traced their *gayness*. Those who referred to themselves as *inborn gays* said that as far back as they could remember, they were already *gay* (*Asal na gay aku*), whilst *environmental gays* often said that their *gayness* only came out at adolescence, usually during high school.¹

In born gays usually pointed to what they saw as the cross-gender feelings and desires of their very early childhood. For example, they only wanted to play with and dress like girls and did not desire to play with boys or boys' toys. The toys and games cited as being for girls included, dolls, *datu-datu* (home made rag dolls), play tea sets or miniature house and furniture sets for playing house-house, while the toys and games cited as being mainly for boys not surprisingly were toy guns and playing war.

In most cases the desire to dress in girls clothes and play with girls and girls toys was seen coming from *gays* themselves. As Mar, a 30 year old former school teacher turned beautician told me:

MJ. When did you realize you were *gay*?

Mar. When I was still a child, my parents knows it already that I am a *gay*. Just because when we are going to 2-3 years old, they brought me to supermarket, and when I saw the dress of a girl, I cried until they bought it for me. So my parents already realized that I am a *gay* and they followed what I wanted. The dress of a girl and baby girl they bought me. They bought me toys for a baby girl. Through that they already knew that I am a *gay*. That's why they cannot deny who am I. Until now.

MJ. So they bought you girl's clothing?

Mar. Yes, because if they didn't I would cry. And just because of that, they know I am really a *gay*. I don't know if we call this an "inborn" or what. Is there any *gays* inborn? According to other observation, the life of a *gay* is

just environmental, but for me it is internal. . . .For me, since the time I was very small I was already a *gay*, through the story of my mother and father.

This is a joke, ok. According to my father when I was just coming out, they could already detect me as a *gay*, because of the way I cried. Through that, my child[hood], I am already a *gay*. Logically if I consider it, I am already a *gay*.

Mar's father told me the same story about going to the textile market and how Mar cried and cried until they were forced to buy the dress for her. This story, moreover, contains a scenario common to many narratives given to me both by *gays*, other members of a *gay*'s family and friends where an individual's *gay* or *bantut* identity is affirmed as inherent and having always been that way. That is, the *gay* individual is seen not just to have desired but demanded to be dressed and treated as a girl and refused to be treated otherwise. This theme of the individual's unswerving intent was a recurring thread, moreover, throughout Mar's father's story. Thus, for instance, when I asked him if he ever had become angry with Mar for being *gay*, he said,

Yes, we were angry with him, but he never wanted or desired girls. During high school and college, girls would come to the house. But even if I may have had an interest in them, he had none.

Mar's and his father's story fits both with what other *gays* told me and what I observed to be the generally tolerant if not positive parental response to young pre-school and school age children who are considered to be *bantut-bantut*, that is persons who exhibit some *bantut* characteristics but are not yet considered to be "real" *bantut*.² *Gays* often cited the important influence of persons in the home, both men but especially women (including mothers, sisters and cousins), who encouraged and played along with them, as in the following comments by Jessica, an English high-school teacher and sometime Miss Gay beauty pageant contestant:

MJ. When did you realize you were *gay*?

J. As far as I can remember it stemmed from my childhood because there was an open-mindedness between my parents. In fact, my mother related to me that when I was a younger child then she used to fit me the dresses of my older sister. And if I want something like a toy, she would buy me a doll. A girl's toy. Not related to the boys toys, like the guns, toy guns and so on.

MJ. Did you ask her for the doll or did she just buy it for you?

J. Either I choose it or she would buy it for me.

MJ. You never choose boy's toys, like a gun.

J. Never.

MJ. So when you were a little girl, you always wore girl's clothes?

J. Yes, sometimes. But then when she wants me to wear the clothing of my brother, who is now a policeman, I would never use it. I prefer to use my sister's cloth. In fact a picture then of when I was using the clothes of my sister. It was burned in 1983.

Other *gays* reported sisters playing dress up and beauty contest with them. One older *gay* called Mother-Jon (who commonly refers to herself as a *bantut*) not only reported that it was his mom who dressed him like a girl and bought him girls toys, but attributes her *bantut*ness to the actions of his mother.

Mother Jon: So back then when my mother would do the laundry, because she had no occupation, there I was at her side sitting. The same when she would iron the clothes. My mother probably thought that since she had no companion to chat with (*magistori-istori*) except the two of us, so she thought and bought me clothes for a little girl as well as "datu-datu" dolls and things for me to play cooking. But even though that was her idea, I did not have any awareness at that point of what I was, when I was dressed in clothes of boy and girl or when dressed like a girl, what I was boy or girl. I did not have any understanding.

But even then I am not [blaming] my mother who has gone to judgment from God and received forgiveness from God. I don't regret (*susun*) that I was dressed like a girl and made into a *bantut*. There are, however, different kinds of *bantut*. There are *bantut* who have no shame, there are also *bantut* with shame. That's the kind of *bantut* I am. But that is what I remember from when I was young at the side of my mother when she would do the laundry and ironing, and I wasn't ashamed- anyways what was there to be ashamed about?

Although this specific scenario was not typical of most *gay* life stories, it was not

uncommon for other persons to trace the development of an individual's *bantutness* to their parent's actions in dressing their children as girls when they were younger. Indeed, what was seen by gays (as by their parents and other persons more generally) to be indicative of *gay/bantut* inclination is, in the first instance, neither related to homosexuality (or impotence), but to the desire to appropriate the objects, play things etc., associated with girls and the domain of women.

This is neither to say that all small children who are considered to be *bantut-bantut* (persons who play at/act like *bantut*) expected (except perhaps retrospectively) to grow up to be real *bantut*, nor that boys do not otherwise play with dolls or girls with toy guns. As Bruno (73:99) has also noted, children (*bata'-bata' pa*) mix readily and freely in a variety of social settings, and in general the sexual orientation and gender identities of young children are usually not a source of parental concern, which perhaps explains why parents so readily play along with young children. Young boys, moreover (I am less sure about young girls but cf. Moore 1981:313) freely and quite openly engage in mutual masturbatory play without any necessary gender implications, although joking comments may be made where one of the children participating is considered to be a *bantut-bantut*. Nevertheless, teasing reprimands such as, "be careful or later on you will become a real *bantut*" are perhaps a tacit acknowledgement of the transformative potential of apparently playful imitation which is seen to characterize *bantut* behaviour even at an early age.

6.3 The Silent Period: Later Childhood in Gay Life Histories.

An interesting facet of *gay* life-histories is that whilst, amongst the "inborn" *gays*, there was usually at least one incident from their early childhood which stands out as uniquely signalling their *gayness*, many *gays* were unusually silent about intermediary elementary school period or what might be called later childhood (from approximately age seven or eight to twelve coinciding with the early years of high school). Some *gays* suggested that their "*gayness*" remained largely unexpressed during this period, citing amongst other things the fact that cross-dressing was limited both by



compulsory school uniforms (although some *gays* said that they would change into girls clothes as soon as school was out) and increased pressure at home to wear boy's clothing.

It would be misleading, however, to regard this age group as under-represented in terms of individuals who openly associate or express some affinity with a *gay/bantut* identity. For instance, in the community of Takut-Takut where I lived during part of my field work, there were at least a dozen young boys who openly identified themselves as *gay* and were commonly called *bantut-bantut*. Nevertheless, a much more ambivalent picture emerges with regards to *gays* in the home, which is to some extent reflected in the increasing pressure placed on them to conform to gender specific dressing.

As Bruno (1973: 100 *passim*) notes, it is precisely in later childhood that there is an increasing segregation of the sexes or, to put it another way, an increasing demarcation of gender roles and activities. This is reflected not only in the formation of much more gender exclusive play groups, but also in a division of domestic labour, with young girls in particular beginning to assume household responsibilities commonly associated with women. Consistently crossing these lines not only demarcates an individual as a *bantut* but also, and perhaps more importantly, usually entails an intensification of teasing and mockery, which unlike the teasing of very young children is increasingly focused on *bantut* sexuality. Whilst mutual masturbatory play may continue amongst boys of this age without any necessary gender implications, *bantut-bantut* are more likely to be the subject of homosexual innuendos, and I have seen boys come up behind these *bantut-bantut* and pretend to engage them in anal intercourse.

One afternoon I was sitting with about six young *bantut/gays* aged from about 7-11 in the home of one of the barangay (community) councillors, while another older *bantut* was also there talking with other women in the house while carrying a young

child on his hip. While I was talking with them, the women and the eldest man in the house were making joking comments and teasing remarks at the young boys. One of the women said to me with much laughter, "that one is my son's sweetheart but they have now split up, because he no longer gives my son any money," a reference to the commonly elaborated *kursinada* or sex for money scenario which is commonly seen to typify *gay* relationships with young men. The young *gay*, who had obviously already mastered most of the stereo-typical *bantut* movements, responded to the above comments by lifting his nose, pursing his lips while turning his head away, his hands placed sultrily on his crossed legs. This brought great amusement to everyone. Later, as I was asking them if they had any sexual experience, the man said loudly, "yes, I think he has lost his virginity" - *nalawa' in pagkavirgin niya*.

There are several points I would make here. The first is that for young *gays* of this age, it is not simply an identification with things gendered feminine which defines their transgenderal expressions, but an identification with an established *gay* identity. Thus, not only had the young *gays* already mastered the postures of older *gays*, but also much of their discourse. One of the first things many of them said to me was taken straight out of a *gay* beauty contest, "Is this the interview portion?" "What is your ambition in life, to be a Nurse, Midwife or Doctor? I am studying to be a Nurse."

Secondly, however, whilst the teasing directed at them is characteristic of the overtly non-threatening way *gays* are treated in general, such humour I would argue belies its serious intent, which is a way of at once reinforcing the socially recognized gender protocols and marking the *bantut-bantut* as moving towards or outside of the acceptable conventions of sexuality. Indeed, it was usually only after they began elementary school that some *gays* reported parental disapproval and in a very few cases physical abuse- ranging from being dowsed with water to being struck. Fathers or elder brothers were usually reported to be the most hostile towards them, although one *gay* reported that it was her mother and not her father that was most

resistant.

The point is that the domestic front becomes much more fraught for the *bantut*.³ Several strategies seem to be adopted by *gays* in response. For some, *gay* or cross-gender expression seems to remain minimal and is consciously (or even perhaps unconsciously) suppressed or in general played down. An alternate strategy is to counter balance overt cross-gender expression outside of the home whilst providing assistance with domestic chores (which young boys would not otherwise willing do) within the home. This not only further enlists the support of the *gay*'s mother and sister, but also has the added advantaged of reinforcing their gender identity.

This appears to be the strategy adopted over the long term by *gays* as they move into adolescence and into *gay* adulthood as a way of gaining or maintaining an accepted place within the home. However, whilst *gays* must continually negotiate their place in the home, it is perhaps most oppressive at this age, since not only are they still subjected to considerable parental constraint, but also they are still economically dependent on them.

6.4 Coming Out: The Context of Gay Adolescence.

In relating life histories, *gays* frequently point to their experience in high-school or college as being the time when, as they put it, "*Gimuwa' tuud in pagkagay ku.*" "My *gayness* really came out". Those *gays* who said they were "environmental" *gays*, that is, *gays* who do not trace their transgenderal feelings back to childhood, similarly pointed to high school or college as the time when their *gayness* came out or, as it is also sometimes expressed, when they were *exposed*. This "coming out of one's *gayness*" represents an extremely important part of the transition into becoming a real *gay*, and is associated, with an emphasis on cross-dressing, a change in bodily postures and movements, close friendships with women, hanging out and/or beginning to work in a beauty parlour, participation in beauty contests, and falling in love.

What *gays* describe as a coming out period is clearly part of the more generally understood transitional phase for the coming of age (*sumangput*) both of young men (*subul*), which is most often signalled and associated with circumcision (*pagIslam*), and of young women (*budjang*), which is marked by the onset of menarche. As I suggested in the previous chapter (chapter 5.3 and 5.4), it is at this juncture and ultimately with respect to marital relations that persons (and through them their kindred) are valorised as oppositional, if complementary, defined categories of persons (and groups of persons): the focal point of social transactions centred around reproduction. There are two further points I would make here in order to set the wider context for the coming out period described by *gays*.

The first point is that whilst marriage transactions continue to be the immediate foci both for the making of gender and for the defining of gender relations, these processes and conventions have been increasingly read through and played out within the space of educational institutions: "elementary", "high school" and "college" are the salient markers and context within which a person's progression from puberty (*akkil ballig*) into adolescence (*sumangput*) to fully engendered adult status is framed. I raise this point here, not just to alert readers to the possible reformulations of gender and gender relations which this historical transformation entails, but more specifically because educational institutions and high school/college in particular appear to be at present, apart from beauty parlours, the single most important site for the formation and articulation of *gay* identity.

Amongst other things, educational institutions have opened up a space for young unmarried women outside the home, a point of no little comment amongst older women who, on the whole, seemed to regard it as a positive development, contrasting it to the traditional isolation of the *budjang* as a protected virginal sister/daughter within the home.⁴ Certainly this is significant for the *gays*, many of whom reported an increasing identification, and development of friendships, not with men but with other young women in high school. Some "environmental" *gays*, in fact, attributed

their "gayness" solely to the influence of women and/or *bantut barkada*- a Tagalog term which might be loosely translated 'buddy' and usually indicates same gender friendship. One high school *gay* said, for instance, that during his first years of high school all of his friends were women. As a result he began to be called a *bantut*, and subsequently came to accept that he was a *gay*, although he says he doesn't like to go around with other *bantut*, just women.

All of this mitigates against any suggestion that institutionalized "same-sex" friendships or pairings amongst men, "may be a crucial factor that blocks, for some Filipinos, the heterosexual transition in adulthood (Hart 1968:245)". For *gays* the crucial transition is from one of relatively free association both with boys and girls and participation in unimplicated homosexual play (characteristic of childhood more generally), to a primary identification with women and the initiation of flirtatious and sexual relationships with men, often engaging in or facilitating their flirtatious (*krush-krush/tunang-tunang*) relations with men.

A second and related point is that in the growing up of young women and young men, it is the latter which is seen to be the most problematic: femininity, female bodies and female sexuality are seen as subject to a natural process of engenderment; masculinity, male bodies and male sexuality are seen as requiring the transmission of potency to complete the process of engenderment. Although women's bodies, like men's bodies are inscribed and sacralized in terms of Islamic ideology in a form of ritual circumcision (*pagsunnat/pagIslam*), it does not constitute for women a rite of passage in the same way that it does for men. Unlike men, women are usually circumcised when they are small children (under the age of 5) and the procedure itself does not usually involve any actual incision.⁵ Whilst for women, circumcision is primarily about the ritual protection of their bodies, which are seen to be naturally endowed with sacred power, for men, circumcision is, in addition to ritual purification and protection, a process of empowerment, associated with the growth of the body and development of masculinity through the acquisition of special

knowledge-power (*ilmu*).

Gays are, like other boys, also circumcised, the expectation being that they will proceed into adulthood as men. That they do not is interpreted as a failure, in the first instance, of masculine potency to 'take' with them, as I noted in the previous chapter. What I suggest below is that what *gays* describe as the "coming out of their *gayness*" represents an alternate but parallel process of empowerment and transformation: one that is valorised in terms of femininity instead of masculinity and one that draws primarily on exogenous sources of power imagined in terms of American beauty and style rather than on local sources of power imagined in terms of Islamic ideology.⁶

6.5 On being "exposed": Empowerment through transformative appropriation.

As in *gay* narratives of early childhood, it is the association with, and development of, femininity, which is seen in the first instance to be indicative, and constitutive, of "*gayness*". The following is an excerpt from Jimmy's life history, who referred to himself as an "environmental" *gay*,

MJ. When did you realize you were *gay*?

J. Since I was elementary, grade 5. But the way I moved back then was like a boy. Even though we played house-house, I also played guns with boys, but if there were girls around I could also play with them. I would play the mother. Mainly during elementary it was like I was a boy, but after first year and second year (high school), then it was like this. Because I was in love. During third even until now it has increasingly come out. Before all my movements were really like a boys. I'm not sure how the body movement changed, only after a lot of bending. Before, I used to really try and make my body move like a girl, but it was very difficult and very stiff because I was used to going around with boys. After that, during high school and college it changed.

MJ. How did you know you were *gay*?

J. Even though within my heart I knew, my classmates had no idea, because my actions were still hard. It was only during 3rd year [high school] that I was really exposed- *naexpose aku*. It was during third year that everyone realized I was *bantut*, and some started mocking me when they found out. Even my mother realized all at once, and she had thought all along that I was

a boy. Because, I was able to go around with other *bantut* who were *maarte-arte* so it influenced me also. "Environmental factors".

MJ. So for you it wasn't like you were *gay* from the beginning?

J. No it was quite startling (*bigla'*) when I came out *gay*. Even though I had some inclination in fifth grade, I really acted like a boy. 2-3rd year I went along with many *gays*. It was a surprise, but it is the plan of God.

MJ. What was your parents response?

J. They said, 'It is enough that Ernie [an older brother] was a *bantut*, why do both of you have to be *gay* especially when it is not an inheritance.' So they *advise* me and threatened to beat me. Its okay now, but they still *advise* me, because I am worse than Ernie. My brother hit me, but not specifically because I was a *bantut* but over other things, and then the fact that I was a *bantut* became mixed up in it.

MJ. What about the response of your teachers at that time?

J. None, they were good to me, and some even said, wow your very *arte*. They appreciate me- *nagappreciate sila*.

There are three terms I should like to pick up on and develop here, each of which frequently occur in *gay* accounts; that is, the notion of exposure, the softening of bodily postures and *maarte'*, the latter a term which in this context references the performative appropriation of an image of beauty and glamour, such as that purveyed in *gay* beauty contests.

The notion of *exposure* is central to the process of gender-transformation articulated by *gays*. Often expressed in terms of "*exposing my beauty*", it is used by *gays* both in reference to the "coming out" period of high school and college, and more particularly in the context of beauty parlours and *gay* beauty contests. Fennela Cannell (1991:365) writing about the *bakla'* (read *bantut*) in Bicol, Luzon (in what could almost be an exact description of the discourse of *gays* in the Southern Philippines) says,

The *bakla'* in fact often seem to assimilate their identity to a language of visibility and hyper-visibility, referring to themselves as "apper" (an appearance) and talking about their power to seduce as "exposing themselves". A common *bakla* greeting is to say "How is your beauty" instead of "How are

you?" and to substitute in ordinary conversation the phrases "my beauty" for "myself" and "your beauty" for "yourself"

The first point to be made is that whilst "beauty" is used by *gays* in self reference, so too *baran*, which denotes the physical body, is more widely used in speaking of one's self as in the construct *baran ku* or *baran-baran ku*- which is a normal way of saying "me myself". The body, *baran*, is recognized to be important in many respects, not least of which is that it is seen to be the locatable container of the immaterial spiritual aspect of a person- including the emotions and sense of well being, memory and longing, as well as potency and intellect- signified by the term *ginhawa*. However, the body (*baran*) is important not simply because it is the second term in the construct *ginhawa-baran*: the body used metonymically to signal the totality of the person. Rather, the body is important precisely because the immaterial aspect and quality of a person is only apprehended by its effects or physical manifestation, a point made by Errington (1989:155-161) in relation to local understandings of the body in Luwu, Sulawesi (see also Chapter 3.1 above). Thus, the notion of exposure and of "exposing my beauty" must in the first instance be considered an extension of the sensibilities already at work in the more general conception and understanding of the self as presence and of the body as an important site for self-transformation.

Beauty is primarily understood to be a bodily practice, and amongst other things, what *gays* cite as setting them apart from men is the emphasis given to the "care" of the body. This includes not only the application of make up, perfumes and powders, but also the use of "skin care" products including special soaps and in some cases skin bleaching agents to provide light, clean, blemish free skin. In addition the application of various lotions and oils is seen to be part of the overall process of the "softening" of their bodies, which is otherwise articulated in terms of the naturalization of bodily movements and postures valorised as feminine. Thus, whilst coming out may be spoken about in terms of the exposure of something which is, as Jimmy puts it, "already known in his heart", the picture that emerges is of an external

process of transformation: a process which is equally recognizable in terms of the growing up of young men as it is in the coming out of *gayness*.

The relation between these two emerges clearly in an important concept related both to beauty and style; that is, *singud/singuran*, which has been translated as "to imitate". What is intended by *singud* is more than simply imitation, however, but rather an active process of appropriation. Many persons in fact used the english word "capture" (*kaptur*) interchangeably with it. For instance, I was often told, by young persons especially, that even whilst they could not always understand an American movie or television program, they would watch them so as to *kaptur* (capture) or *singuran* the *istyle* - the speech, clothes, etc., of the programs.

That *singud* implies more than simply imitation, however, is also seen in the transmission of the *ilmu' pagkausug* - the knowledge-power which renders one in the state of continuing manhood, which is associated with circumcision, *pagIslam*. Circumcision generally takes place in the early teens and roughly coincides with the first years of high school, although it may be as early as 6 or 7 years or as late as 18 (Bruno 1973:111). Circumcision appears to be a fairly widespread practise in the Philippines, although it has taken on extra significance among the Tausug and the Sama most of whom see it as rendering one Muslim, as suggested by the designation *pagIslam*- to become Islam. Boys who have been circumcised are commonly described as *Islamna*- already circumcised or already Islam. As Kiefer (1972b:126) notes circumcision, "has assumed an importance far greater than usually found in the Middle East; almost assuming the status among the Tausug as an additional pillar of Islam."

Circumcision (*pagIslam*) and the transmission of the knowledge-power of masculinity (*ilmu' pagkausug*) are critical in as much as these processes are seen to initiate the necessary transformation, or growing up, of boys into men. Indeed, as I understand it, there is an inextricable relation between *pagIslam* (circumcision), the *ilmu'*

pagkausug (the knowledge-power of masculinity) and *isug* (bravery), the word for coward, *bulasan*, a derivative from the root word *bulas*, which refers to the build up of secreted matter under the prepuce of uncircumcised men.⁷

It is interesting in this regard to note the commonly expressed notions about the effects of circumcision on young men. It is said that after circumcision a young man will enter a period of physical growth, becoming stronger and more vigorous. Those men who were circumcised at a fairly early age - 6 or 7 - said that the reason for this was that their parents wanted them to develop quickly, and their bodies to grow strong (*kimusug*). Moreover, while there is no transmission of actual bodily substance from older to younger men as in the ritualized homosexuality which characterizes rites de passage for men in some parts of Melanesia (cf. Herdt 1981; 1982), what is emphasized is the transgenerational transmission of spiritual power or potency, which as a set of ritual procedures is focused on, as it is indexed in, the body.

The transmission of the *ilmu' pagkausug* (knowledge-power of masculinity) is usually from one individual to another and never takes place in public or within the context of group initiation or ritual. The *ilmu' pagkausug* is considered to be *pusaka'* (an inheritance) and is often passed down from father or father's brother to son or from elder brother to younger brother, although in the past at least, young men may have also acquired this *ilmu'* from a guru. The acquisition of the *ilmu' pagkausug* primarily involves imitating, *singuran*, a mixture of Arabic and Tausug words (*bassahun*) which are uttered, chanted or spat out, in some cases whilst bathing the body: *singuran* spoken of with reference to *ilmu'*, both as a process of internalization (*hatihun*) and as a external process through which one is clothed or dressed in power.

The point is, I argue, with regards to the *gays*, that the notion of *exposure* and of *exposing my beauty* similarly signals this active process of transformation, and *gays* are both considered and consider themselves to be masters of *singuran*, masters of

istyle (style). That is to say, exposing one's beauty is neither an uncovering to reveal something hidden, nor simply a process of covering over to conceal that which must remain hidden, but rather an active process of objectification which through the, as it were, literal application of the layer upon layer of signs of beauty, enacts an ontological transformation.⁸

In one - the development of masculinity - as in the other -the coming out or exposure of one's *gayness* - it is a question of empowerment through appropriation: the appropriation of, on the one hand, the knowledge-power of masculine potency, and, on the other hand, images of beauty and glamour valorised as feminine. It is this sensibility of transformative imitation which emerges in *gay* life histories, both in the playful warning of parents to young children about playing at being a *bantut* lest they become one, and in narrative accounts of the coming out of one's *gayness* and increasing development of femininity. Moreover, what the construct *pagkausug* (the state of continuing manhood) like the construct *pagkagay* (the state of increasing *gayness*) signal is the ongoing process through which one's masculinity, or alternately one's *gayness*, is not just expressed but must be continually realized. As I demonstrate below, a similar theme emerges with respect to sexuality, where both young men's and *gay*'s early sexual experiences are sometimes referred to as "testings".

6.6 On Losing One's Virginity: Testings and the engenderment of *gay* sexuality.

Although the coming out period is not in the first instance usually associated by *gays* with sexuality, their first experience of being penetrated in anal intercourse is seen as part of the transition into becoming a "real *gay*". As indicated above, young boys engage in various masturbatory activities, without any necessary gender implications. Whilst this may simply be mutual masturbation amongst themselves, they may also masturbate older *bantut* and even non-*bantut* men. This is very different from the sensibilities articulated by older adolescents and young men. Most *subul* in fact said

that while they masturbate on their own, they would never engage in mutual masturbation with another *subul*, although they often said they would allow a *bantut* to masturbate them. Indeed, the high school *gay*, whose story I related above, said that after he began to be called a *bantut*, other *subul* in his school would come up to him in the toilet to be masturbated by him. *Gay*'s on the other hand say that whilst they would be willing to masturbate a man (and be masturbated by them) they would never allow themselves to be masturbated by another *gay*. The point is that it is at this stage that what might otherwise be termed homosexual acts, including masturbation, become valorized in terms of specific sexual roles and gender ideology.

The average age of first sexual encounter with full anal penetration by a man was reported by *gays* to be around 12-13. The earliest age reported was 8 years old with others being as late as 17. A number of these first time experiences involve "older" men, in some cases 10 years older, with the male partner usually described as a neighbour, classmate or close cousin. Being forced to participate in sexual intercourse was reported in several instances, and even where not forced, it was the male partner which was universally seen to initiate sex. Most *gays* said they experienced a great deal of physical pain as well as emotional shock, as is evident from the following accounts related to me.

(The following interview was conducted mainly in english so is a direct transcription from the tape)

MJ. When was your first sexual experience with a man.

Mar. When I was 16 years old. First year college. When I was in high school, I was acting as a *gay* but not to the extent of going to a guy. I love to make *istori*, puppy love, but not to the extent of going with them and having sex. My first experience with them was first year college. There was an occasion at school, a bonfire, and after that you didn't go home but stayed at campus, so through that, something I had. I was 16-17. Just to have experience. I told him I didn't have any experience, but he didn't believe me that I don't have an experience. Wherein my anus is having bleeding because he forced me doing something. He forced me. He said, "if you don't have any experience, then I have to teach you having like this and like that." Then after that, I got a phobia, I didn't want to have like that. After two to three months he approached me again. So I like it. Doing that sex having a *gay*

with him. (Tagalog) *Ganon na sulut-sulut na iyon*- so I was ok now [doing that with him]. So he invited me to stay with him at night. *Gustoko na rin*- It was what I really wanted now. And through that having a contact with him again, I fell in love with him. And he treated as a love. Like we were sweethearts. He waited for me at time for snacks, and he would wait for my class to be out at six o'clock.

Another *gay* called Helen describes her experience.

I was just a child. That's when I first started holding/playing with other boys, but I had not as of yet had sex with them. After that when I grew up a bit (matured-matured na aku) - this was when I was 15-18 years old - those same boys came back to see if was really a girl; to *test* me like a *virgin*. So then my first cousin- yes my first cousin and I haven't even told any of my *bantut* friends this- asked my mother, let Abdulhallim (my real name) to sleep with us. There are some boys and we wish to hear him sing some tagalog songs. That night (made motions of anal sex) What's this, I said, because I was like a virgin- you squirm etc., but you also want it and you say no! no! and then you are filled with sexual desire. It just the same [women and *bantut*] one is filled with sexual desire. When that happened, my feelings like a girl were more than ever. After that I read the Koran- I was learning to read the koran then but never finished- I didn't know about these things, so I told myself, "read, read" What is this?" Within the course of the one night it happened maybe five times. In the morning my cousin said to me don't tell anyone about this. I said, "its your problem", but my hair was standing on end.

There are several important elements which emerge in the above accounts. While some *gays* reported, as in the Helen's case, that following their initial encounter they were filled with a strong sexual desire and began regularly seeking out sex, many others reported that there was a significant break between the first and later sexual encounters because of their initial embarrassment and shock. In this respect, *gay* accounts of their first sex not only contradict men's denial of engaging in anal intercourse, but also contradicts the more usual picture of the man as the prey of the voracious sexuality of the *bantut*. Indeed, what is most striking about the accounts of first sexual intercourse is the apparent force and violence exercised by men over the *bantut*. This sexual violence, however, appears to be transformed within the terms of *gays* transgenderal project so that it is subsequently seen as a confirmation or further realization of their femininity.

The gender imagery is seen in the explicit references to virginity, as in Helen's account above, but also in Mar's account, as in other's, where anal bleeding features as a sign of one's transformed status, signalling a transformation between simply "acting like a *gay*" and becoming a real *gay* through as he puts it "doing that sex having a *gay* with him"; being a "real" *gay* defined in terms of penetration in anal intercourse. Not surprisingly, virginity, the loss and/or pretence of retention thereof, is a frequent focus of *gay* banter, especially with younger *gays* who may just be starting to hang-out (*nagistandby*) in the parlours. Thus, for instance, on one occasion where a group of *gays* were narrating their individual life-histories, one older *gay* was referred to as a virgin and teasingly berated for calling himself a *gay* whilst never having experienced anal intercourse but only intracrural sex (sex between the thighs). As in Helen's case, moreover, a *gay's* first experience was often described in terms of the male partner *testing* the *gay* "to see if they were really girls" a theme also implicit in Mar's account above where it is also spoken of as teaching and gaining experience.

The notion of *testing* articulated by *gays* in many respects parallels the discourse of *testing* amongst young men. It is usually after circumcision that young men begin to talk about sexual exploits, and the life-history narratives given by men often stressed this post-circumcision *testing*:

Pagubus ku namayan Islam, paguli', kiya "fight" magtuy ha tunang ku. Plus, pagkadtu ku pa Zambo, na didtu tuud nakapag "derby" iban manga puta.

After I was circumcised, when the wound had healed, I engaged (it) in fighting with my girlfriend. Plus, when I went to Zamboanga, it was there that I was really able to "derby" - (cockfight) - with prostitutes.

The sense of *testing* post-circumcision articulates with what Kiefer (1972b) has previously written on the risk taking orientation of young Tausug men in the hinterlands, where there is a clear correlation between young men, warfare and piracy, both of which represent a *testing*. Kiefer (1972b:85) quotes from one informant who told him that "sometimes people go on piracy raids not only for the

loot, but also to 'test their amulets and their magical power [presumably referring to their *ilmu*'].

The point is that boys are seen to grow up into men only through a process of repeated *testings*, not just of the body but more fundamentally of the spiritual power or potency which they possess, a common theme in the growing up of young men throughout this area (see for instance, amongst others Sutlive 1992:275-276). *Gays*, in appropriating the language of *testing*, have linked their early sexual experiences to the exposure of their *gayness*, which as I have suggested, similarly references a sense of empowerment or quality of potency valorised as feminine.

I shall have more to say about *gay*-men relations in the next chapter. In the final part of this chapter I explore some of the wider contours of *gay* life moving through and beyond the coming out period. In particular I will briefly set out what is one of the most significant defining factors in terms of local *gay* experience, relative age. The distinction between younger and more mature *gays* which I outline below provides an important backdrop for understanding the way in which the *gays* are constructed in the wider community and the ways in which *gays* imagine their own transgenderally defined projects, both in terms of love (discussed in the next chapter) and in terms of beauty and style (discussed in chapters 8 and 10 below).

6.7 Beyond Exposure: On the mature *gay* life.

The *gays* whose life-histories I have drawn from in this thesis, may be roughly divided between younger *gays* who see themselves still in the coming out period and those *gays* for whom coming out simply represents a transitional phase into their life as "mature" *gay* persons. Although age is not the only basis for the distinction drawn between younger and more mature *gays*, and whilst there is no definite point marking this transition, few *gays* beyond their early twenties, still associate with what I have, following local *gay* conventions, termed the coming out period.

In part the distinction between younger and mature *gays* relates to their relative positioning vis a vis the wider community. Young *gays* may largely be considered to be *bantut-bantut* (that is, men who are simply pretend or fake *gays*) and the possibility, and sometimes hope is expressed by persons, particularly family members, that they might yet begin again (*nagbagu*), that is, become real men, get married, and have a family. On the other hand, in the case of older *gays*, it is generally accepted that their fate (*suratan*), is to remain as unmarried *bantut*.⁹

Such age distinctions has several important implications, both for the way in which *gays* are perceived and treated and for the way in which they perceive themselves. Young *gays* frequently reported their relationship with their parents to be, as they put it, "Okay, *nagadvise lang sila*- ok, they only *advise* me," most adding that they were simply told not to overdo it with make up and women's dress or going with men since this brought shame on the family (*makasipug*). Although usually not elaborated, from what other more candid *gays* said (see Jimmy's account above), it is clear that the tenor of parental/sibling *advise* often bordered on harsh scoldings, although actual physical punishment or abuse, at least from their parents, is even rarer than that reported during later childhood (Bruno 1973: 116).

But if domestic tensions are something which must continually be negotiated by *gays* (especially given the fact that the majority of younger *gays* are living in their parents or other close relatives' home), adolescent *gays* are able to spend much time outside the home, largely free of parental constraint. Thus, it is during this time that *gays* begin to engage in *casual* sexual liaisons (see Chapter 7 below), participate in beauty contests and hang-out (*nagistandby*), and in some cases begin to work in beauty parlours. The latter in particular are not only important sites for *exposure*, second only to beauty contests in this respect, but also provides many young *gays* with an important source of income separate from that of their parents.

Unmarried youth, many of whom, in the town of Jolo, do not work outside the home,

are seen as placing great demands on parental resources, mainly because of their desire for, and expenditure on, personal *istyle* (see chapter 8 below) and other consumption outside of the home. This particularly applies to men, but sometimes women as well. This is reported to be a widespread source of conflict between parents and adolescent children within the home, although parents both say they feel obligated to meet their children's demands, since to be seen to do otherwise is shameful (*makasipug*), and express a sense of pride in being able to provide for their children, particularly if they are also able to send them to high school and college, which is a source of prestige.

The tension over economic resources sometimes exacerbates young *gays* experience in the home. On one occasion, for example, when I was at the home of two *gay* brothers during a period of extreme financial strain in the family, I overheard their mother who was otherwise generally amicable, berate Jimmy (who like his brother Ernie did not work) for being a *gay* and for spending money on costumes for *gay* beauty contests. Repeating almost word for word what Ernie and Jimmy had previously told me about her reaction to them, she told Jimmy, "It is enough that Ernie is a *bantut*, why do you have to be a *bantut* as well, especially since you did not inherit it from anyone!"

However, those *gays* who do work - *gays* are usually able to obtain part-time or casual employment in the beauty parlours and I would say that a majority of older *gays* in Jolo have at one time or another worked in a beauty parlour - not only obtain a measure of financial independence from their parents and reduce this potential source of conflict, but also, more positively, are able to contribute to the income of the household at a relatively young age. Nor is it simply a matter of money, since there is a certain prestige and glamour associated with work in the beauty parlour, which is not the case with the jobs that would otherwise be generally available for young persons who either want to or have to work. Thus, there are other important issues related to class, status and social trajectories which must be taken into any

account of gay life: questions which I address more fully in Chapter 8 below.

The point here is simply that having a steady job, being in control of one's finances and thus being able both to contribute to the household and/or financially sponsor a family member's education as well as support a steady boyfriend (see Chapter 7) were generally seen as characteristic of older, more mature, *gays*. Certainly those parents who responded positively about *gay/bantut* sons usually cited, often in contrast to other unmarried sons who were said to eat up household resources, the contribution which *gays* made to the household economy both in terms of their labour within the home and in terms of the extra income brought into the home by them. Gays seem to feel considerable pressure in this regard, although equally they use it as a means of exerting leverage and deflecting criticism of their lifestyle. For example, two gays told me that they had effectively silenced their families criticism through their contributions to the bride price for a brother's marriage.

The primary difference between younger and more mature *gays* which I wish to draw out, however, is the way in which they articulate and orient themselves in the longer term towards an expressed *gay* transgenderal project. Those *gays* who still saw themselves in terms of the coming out phase, did not necessarily rule out the possibility of beginning again (*nagbagu*), and were more likely to express ambivalence about whether or not they were in fact men or women. The one thing they sited as possibly discouraging them from becoming men and getting married was the shame of getting married and having people make remarks behind their back about their wife being stuck with a *bantut*. On the whole, however, younger *gays* did not seem overtly pre-occupied with these questions. Rather what primarily emerged in their life histories was the sense of empowerment engendered through their appropriation of feminine beauty and glamour, and what was most often expressed by them was the enjoyment of being *gay*; the pleasure of exposing their beauty and having sex with men.

Older *gays*, on the other hand, were more adamant about the enduring nature of their transgenderal feelings, and their transgenderal projects were more clearly articulated in terms of being accepted and treated as real women. They were, in this respect, also more likely to express a tragic side to *gay* experiences. One of the things which *gays*, and older *gays* in particular, expressed concern about was not having any remembrances (*panumtuman*, cf. Chapter 3.3 above). Whilst this was at times simply expressed in terms of their inability to bear children, due to the fact they did not possess women's bodies, it was more often expressed, as I suggest below, in terms of their inability to realize the 'give and take' of 'true love' relationships with men (see Chapter 7). On a still wider level, it is related by *gays* to the fact that they are not treated as real people.

However, there is no fixed point dividing younger and more mature *gays*, and the sense of empowerment and the sense of tragedy cannot be simply read off in terms of how old a *gay* is. Some older *gays* associated themselves with the sense of exposure articulated by younger *gays*, whilst some younger *gays* associated themselves with the desire for social acceptance expressed by more "mature" *gays*. Moreover, both are expressive of the contradictory moments which seems to characterize *gays* experience more generally. As I will argue in more detail below (Chapter 10) this is related to their engenderment as persons who at once represent and embody a certain quality of otherness, but who are denied a part in the transactional processes through which this otherness is constituted as a part of social memory.

Endnotes:

1. Hart (68:238) notes that most of his informants believed that *bayot*- the *Cebuano* equivalent of *bantut*- traits were hereditarily transmitted, although there were a number that cited either "cultural" influences- especially early childhood experiences- or "the will of God". There is a similar range of ideas expressed by the Tausug and Sama. The fact that one's son is a *bantut* may be seen as the result of inherited traits. The word most often used to describe this inheritance is *supuhanun*- from the root *supu* meaning resemblance which when affixed as above seems to convey the idea of an inherited physical trait. If a *bantut*, for instance, has male relatives on either side (cognatic descent) who are *bantut*, then usually their *bantutness* is seen as being inherited. Although notions of transmitted substance as a mechanism for inheritance are implied in *supuhanun*, *supuhanun* seems to also be used at a more general level in reference to someone- a child/son or daughter- sharing some characteristic or attribute whether physical or personal with anyone who can be remotely classified as a kinsperson in an ascending generation. Gays sometimes joking referred to this as *pusaka*' - which otherwise designates inherited material objects or as I translate it inherited items of remembrance.

Some persons also said that even while not having an inheritance someone may still be born a *bantut*, thus an inborn *bantut*. This might be explained as a result of their mother having laughed at a *bantut* while they were still in the womb. Although Nanda (1990:6-7) interestingly notes that the Hijra in India are seen to have the power to curse and render male infants impotent just as they are seen to be empowered with the ability to bless and increase a male child's virility, this is not directly attributed to the *bantut*. Rather it seems more a product of their anomalous status, and a commonly recited *pali-palihan* or folk tale asserts that if a pregnant woman laughs at a person with any kind of physical or mental defect, then the child in their womb will be afflicted in the same way.

Most persons were undecided as to whether it was simply that more men were being born *bantut*, whether it was a result of their parents having dressed them as girls when they were still young children or whether they were being simply a result of being influenced, *nalamin*, by other *bantut*, as an expression of cultural colonization, an point which I return to in more detail below (see Chapter 10).

2. It is necessary to note my disagreement with Elizabeth Moore's hypothesis concerning the *bantut* and her more general assertion about Tausug adult-children relationships. Moore (1981:314 *passim*) argues in her Ph.D. dissertation that Tausug children suffer from the deprivation of maternal nurturance and the repression of affect. This, she argues, differentially surfaces in culturally defined adult gender roles. For men, this repression surfaces in the violent action sanctioned and necessitated by the defense of Islam, whilst women, "who are denied culturally approved modes of actively aggressive behaviour", further repress and internalize this in the maintenance of the culturally required controlled behaviour expected of women.

The *bantut*, Moore (1981:316) suggests, "may be the products of childhood experience so negative that their suppressed hostility toward the other image is such that a sexual avoidance of all women (because they generate this rage) may be their only means of avoiding the larger, and more threatening, issue of conflict itself".

3. I would agree with Moore (1981: 290) in reference to later childhood when she says that, "when the child is deemed capable of minimal understanding, it is the mother's responsibility to assure that the child learns its appropriate roles, and this seems accomplished primarily through negative reinforcement. Fortunately for the children this is rarely accomplished by means of physical punishment. . . The preferred disciplinary measure is verbal abuse and shaming of the child, and although this is an almost constant facet of mother/child interaction, it remains a very effective means of parental control."

4. Traditionally with the onset of menarche, women's interaction with men was to be closely guarded. Bruno (1973:) reports that formerly a specially secluded mezzanine (*angkap*) would have been built for one's virginal daughters within the house with a light bamboo ladder which would have been raised when guests were present in the house. Pre-marital physical contact, ranging anywhere from *kubliti-kubliti* (touching-touching) to sexual intercourse, was prohibited and could bring with it the sanction of a fine (*multa'/sa'un*) levied against the family of the male offender or in some cases violent reprisals. Again, however, it is perhaps more appropriate to speak of sexual protocols, rather than simply normative codes of behaviour. As Kiefer notes (1972b: 36) the overriding concern was/is with the public expression of sexuality, and the opportunities for pre-marital sexual play were/are probably greater than they appeared on the surface.

5. That female circumcision is usually not referred to as *pagIslam*, but as *pagsunnat*, from the Arabic *sunna'*, meaning desirable not obligatory, might also suggest that it is not invested with as much significance. One local Islamic scholar or *ustadz*, told me that the *pagsunnat* was not necessary for women and was as he put it "under discussion". However, this does not mean that the *pagsunnat* is unimportant, and many persons whilst referring to it as *pagsunnat*, still maintain that it is *wajib*, obligatory and that it similarly constitutes an initiation into Islam (Moore 1981: 182; Bruno 1973:110). Moreover, some persons suggest that women who have not undergone the *pagsunnat* or ritual circumcision will turn out to be *biasan*, a flirtatious woman with loose sexual morals. Moore (1981) further reports that in cases of inter-faith marriage where a Tausug man marries a non-Tausug Christian Filipino woman, that upon conversion, she will be circumcised, and also suggests that some Tausug men will not eat the food prepared by an uncircumcised woman. In terms of the circumcision itself, although Moore (1981:183) reports that in the *pagsunnat* she witnessed in a Tausug family in Zamboanga an incision of the clitoris was made, the *pagsunnat* I witnessed in Jolo only involved the light scraping of the vaginal area above the clitoris with a blunt bamboo knife. The same is reported by Bruno (1973: 109) and Casino (1976: 98).

6. In certain respects what I argue here is similar to what Sutlive (1992) argues with respect to the Iban *manang bali*, who, he suggests, adopts an "alternate route to normal adulthood, through pursuing contact with spiritual forces / power which define them as feminine.

7. *Isug* (bravery) as Kiefer (1972b:52 *passim*) has underscored in his ethnography of the Tausug, is seen if not as the defining factor of Tausug masculinity, certainly as its aesthetic ideal, and amongst other things is associated with aggressive and potentially violent action in questions of shame and honour (*sipug*). In an interesting anecdote reported by Teo (1989:118), among the Sama he interviewed in Siasi, after the incision, the Imam tells the boy to dedicate his pain to a girl (*angang- gasa*). If the boy refuses, he is called a *bantut*.

8. I would note that Fennella Cannell's (1991) account of the *bakla'* (Tagalog for *bantut*) resonates with as it has helped shaped my own analysis of the *bantut*, particularly as regards the transformative potential of imitation (cf. also Cannell 1995) and beauty. However, this interpretation also finds resonance with more recent gender theorist such as Butler (1990 ; 1993) who have stress the performative work of sexuality (cf. Newton [1979] for an early example and Abu-Lughod [1987] for a more recent comparative discussion of the way the gendered self is constituted in and through exterior spaces). That is to say, gender is seen as a process of externalization which does not simply grow out of a prior interior identity, but rather the process of externalization is an intrinsic part of the process of internalization and identity formation. This in turn may be related to wider comparative anthropological literature on style, consumption and objectification (cf. Miller 1987: 1984) as well as on bodily decoration (cf. Gell 1983) and masquerades (cf. Napier 1986) all of which focus on and place emphasis on the transformational potential of practises which are often regarded, whether in more classical role and functional models (Goffman 1971) or post-modernist writings as superficial and secondary.

9. Kiefer (1972b) has previously written of the distinction made by the Tausug between *kadal-* which he glosses 'theological fate', which has to do with one's allotted time on earth and the reality of death and *sukud*, which he glosses 'empirical fate' or 'luck' operating more on the everyday level to explain events which may otherwise be unexplainable. However, an equally if not more important idea used in relation to the *bantut* is the notion of *suratan*. *Suratan* is also concerned with fate or predestination, but is used primarily in the specific context of discussions of marriage and producing children; that is to say if a man or woman remains unmarried (*subul / budjang liyaunan*), is continually thwarted in love or is unable to produce children, this is seen as being their *suratan*. The determining factor in any event is that it is from the will of God, and one of the six commonly recited articles of belief, is *magparatchaya ha untung marayaw iban mangi' hahandak dain ha Allahu Taala-* which asserts that one must accept that whatever befalls one is ultimately a result of Allah's divine will (Ustaz Hapa Ebing n.d.: 12) It is, as some persons put it, "what was given to them by God- *amu na in kiyahandak kanila*," some going so far as to

suggest that the *pangikutan* (forerunner) of the *bantut* was *Lut*, that is Lot of Sodom and Gomorrah fame. However, the issue of the individual bearing moral responsibility especially with regards to marriage and for women with regards to bearing children is not always so cut and dried, so that for some persons, especially those who identify themselves with the teachings of the *kamaasan*, it is a sin not to marry, whether or not it is in one's *suratan*.

Chapter 7: Imagining Love: A Cartography of Transgenderal Identities and Homosocialities in the Southern Philippines.

7.1 Introduction: On Ethno-cartographies.

In this chapter I present a brief description of the various kinds of relationships which *gays* talk about having with men. Specifically, I suggest that *gay* intentionalities and their transgenderal projects can be mapped out along local transactional trajectories and in relation to variously conceived real and imaginary worlds. On the one hand, the gender implications of *gays*' sexual encounters with men varies according to whether the relationship is conceived in terms of *remembrances* or debts, which, as I have already indicated, broadly correspond to the anthropological categories of gift and commodity. On the other hand, the potential for the realization of *true love* and the affirmation of their transgenderal identity is related, in *gay* imagination, to its symbolic proximity to America.

In a recent review of lesbian and gay studies in anthropology, Kath Weston (1993: 340-341) notes that,

Many of the scholars working within lesbian/gay studies in anthropology find themselves engaged in a form of ethnocartography, looking for evidence of same-sex sexuality and gendered ambiguity in "other" societies. Implicitly framing much of this literature is an old fashioned empiricist project allied to a hard-won understanding of the sexual politics that continue to target lesbian and gay male relationships in Anglo-European societies.

In short there has been a kind of butterfly collecting approach (Leach 1971) in which persons have attempted to classify various forms of homosociality and "gender bending" into universal types or categories, such as mixed and transgenderal, age or transgenerational and egalitarian homosexuality. One way in which persons have sought to move beyond the limitations of this classificatory process is to adopt a more dynamic contextual and transactional approach to such categorizations, looking, for instance, at semen transactions in Melanesia (cf. Herdt 1993) or the sexual-monetary transactions of male prostitutes in Brazil (cf. Cornwall 1994), which seemingly controvert the conventional definition of the sexual roles of male transvestites and homosexuals. Similarly, as I demonstrate below, a whole string of relations are

enumerated by *gays*: There is the *callboy* relation in which money is exchanged by *gays* for sexual service by men, and its inverse in Malaysia where men pay *gays* for sex in what is a form of *gay* prostitution. Then there are *casuals* which, as the name suggests, are short term relations. Finally, there are *steady* and *live-in*, which at least in *gay* representations, comes closest to approximating *gay* ideals of their relationships with men.

Obviously, I was not privy as an observer to all the variegated liaisons that were described to me, nor was I prepared to enter as participant into sexual liaisons with my *gay* friends/informants, although this was sometimes expected of me. Rather the picture I present here is primarily drawn from *gay*'s, and to a lesser extent men's, representation of these relationships. In particular I focus on the intentionalities and relative position (sexual and otherwise) each expresses vis-a-vis the other in their encounters, and how this maps out and maps onto other oppositions in the local cultural geography. It is on this basis that I outline what, to re-appropriate Weston's (1993) terms, might be called a cartography of homosociality and transgenderal identities.

7.2 *Call/Service* and *Ha-Ha! Boys*: Men Working *Gays*.

Call/service boy relationships are short term sexual relationships in which men are paid by *gays* to "work" them; that is, to masturbate ("play the piano"), fellate ("sing") or penetrate them in anal intercourse ("dance"). *Callboys* are primarily associated with Zamboanga and other larger cities such as Cebu and Manila (cf. Whitam 1993 and Matthews 1990 for a summary of *callboys* in each of these places respectively).¹ In Zamboanga, which is where most *gays* from the town of Jolo go to pick up *callboys*, there is a fairly well developed *callboy* circuit, although unlike female prostitution there are no specific *callboy* fronts run by pimps, but rather just an informal network of contacts and well known pick-up spots.

In the community in Zamboanga where I first started doing field work, I had met an older *gay-bantut* man and was asking several people in the community why I rarely

saw him around. Every one laughed and told me that he was always at the *sini* (the cinema). The cinema, as I discovered on a visit with one of my *gay* friends, was a well known pick-up spot for *callboys*. With their bag or backpack of necessary "hygienic" equipment (a towel or tissue), *callboys* would wander around the movie theatre looking for men sitting alone and would quietly approach them, asking, "service"? If they do not get an immediate verbal response, they may attempt to place their hand on the crotch of a man's trousers and begin massaging their penis through his pants. If the man does not react negatively, the *callboy* will continue until he finishes the job, although sometimes they may be asked to perform fellatio as well. Apart from *service* in the cinemas, which can be had for anything from 15-25 pesos, *gays* also pick up *callboys* in the several discos and night markets in town, and will sometimes pay a *callboy* to spend the night with them, which may cost 100 pesos or more.

In Jolo there does not seem to be the same numbers of *callboys*, nor do *gays* use the cinema in the same way, although there are several *f-f* or *fighting fish* beta (X rated video houses) which are frequented by some *gays*. Young boys (ranging in age from 8-12 years old) also frequent these video houses and it is these boys who may be called on by the *gays* for "service". These are the so-called, by the *gays* in Jolo, *ha! ha! boys* who will sometimes masturbate or fellate *gays* for as little five pesos.

There are several important things which emerge in *gay* representations of these relations. The first is that the *gays* see the *callboy* relationship as a balanced sex for money exchange. In cases, such as the cinema, where nothing has been said by the *gay* to the *callboy* or where no fixed price has been prearranged between them, *gays* say they will sometimes leave the *callboy* without paying, and when the *callboy* complains simply say, "I didn't ask for anything." However, this is seen as being mean-spirited and cruel and most *gays* indicated that they either paid the sum negotiated prior to sexual activity or paid according to established precedent.

A second issue concerns the gender identities proffered in these exchanges. It is important to be clear from the outset that those persons who openly identify

themselves as *gay* (or who are identified as *bantut*), are, at least in this part of the Philippines, never paid by men for sex. Rather, it is always men who are paid by *gays* for sex, and all the *callboys* I knew considered themselves to be men. However, *gays*, as well as other men, often regarded the *callboys* somewhat ambivalently, sometimes upholding their identity as men, but also sometimes expressing the view that they might secretly be "closet queens" or, even worse, *silahis* or *double-blades*, since they were commonly known to perform sexual roles - and in particular fellatio - that would in the local protocols be otherwise associated with the *gay/bantut*. Similarly, although most *gays* usually upheld the local protocols of *gay* sexuality saying that they themselves would never pay to penetrate a *callboy*, they often suggested that they had friends or knew other *gays* that had done so. The point is that *callboy* relationships are the most ambiguous in terms of the gender identities proffered in sexual exchange. However, whilst this would suggest that there may be a wider range of homosexual practises than is otherwise presented in the local protocols, more importantly I think, it highlights the wider context within which a distinctly engendered *gay* sexuality is expressed and realized.²

7.3 Working Abroad: *Billy/Bennie Boys* in Sabah.

The inverse of the *callboy* situation is the case of *gays* who have been to Malaysia and worked as transvestite-homosexual prostitutes (*bennie* or *billyboys*). This forms part of the more general movements of people and goods between Sabah and the Southern Philippines. I personally knew three *gays* who had recent experiences working in Sabah, although they said there were many more *gays* from the Southern Philippines living and working in Sabah. According to one *gay* who had recently returned from Malaysia, one could earn an average of 100 *Ringgit* a night, which was in 1991-92, about 1000 *Pesos* or approximately 10 times a good days earnings, working in a beauty parlour in Jolo.

One older *gay* who had gone to Borneo in the late 1960's related the following story of her stay in Sandakan:

I stayed a long time in Borneo. Before, we used to work at the house of the Governor. That was during my previous time here in Jolo. I was still very

young then. [Just over 20 years ago in the late 1960's] At the house of the governor, Benjamin Abu Bakr. We left without leave taking. That was the one bad thing we did. We went to Sandakan. The fare [to Sabah] back then was only about 25 pesos per head. Four of us *gays* fled there. When we arrived there, we didn't yet know how to speak *Malayu*. We were just newly arrived. So we put on our make up on the boat, and we asked the man there, "Is it alright if we go into town with skirts on?" The people on the boat said, "Oi! later on you will be caught by the police and you have just newly arrived." I said, "No we won't".

Back then I was very clean and I didn't yet have a beard. So off we went in our skirts - I had a very short mini-skirt with halter and shoulder bag. After that the police saw us and they were just wondering what was up with us. They called to us, but we couldn't understand. So I said in my broken English, "Well I am sorry I cannot understand in your dialect." They asked us if we were Badjao. Although I couldn't understand what they were asking, I heard Badjao, and I said, "Hey, we are not Badjao." After that, they said "*Suluk kamu?*" - "Are you Tausug?" They are not that handsome the Malays.

So they brought us to an Englishman, whose eyes were blue. So I said here we are, Mercy, Helen, Gloria, Naida. The Englishman asked me, "Are you a Bennie boy?" I said, "Yes, I am a Bennie boy. Why? Can you afford?" I then told Naida, who knew how to speak English much better than me, "Talk to the man in English". The man said, "What do you want?". So I said, "Answer him Naida". The Englishman said, "What?" I said "What?" Then he said, do you know how to dance? I said yes. So he put on a tape, and we started doing the "twist", the dance from before, until we were sweating. So then they fed us bread and gave us 7-Up. "You are beautiful," one of them said. "Follow me he said, I want to ask you something." I said, "Where?", but he made me follow him. Then he started kissing me on the neck. I said "I am not prepared. There will be a time." *Hati, magbalik da man aku* - meaning, I'll come back to you another time. I hadn't cleaned and was afraid, but he said never mind. So he penetrated me but just a little bit. Then he gave me an envelope. When I opened it, I saw that it was two ten Ringgit notes. Whether American, Japanese, Chinese it was all the same, all gave money, 20 dollars. It was the same whether it was oral or anal. So that's why here I will not give if boys ask me for money.

Helen called herself a prostitute, as did one other *gay* in reference to her work in Malaysia, and the relationships which they had with men abroad were, in general, represented to be short term, sex for cash exchanges. In contrast to call/service boy relationships, however, there did not seem to be the same question about the potential inversion of sexual roles: at least, the issue was never raised in the same way that it

was with respect to *callboys*. Rather, the *gays* that had worked in Sabah saw themselves as having been specifically paid to play the transgenderal partner in sexual intercourse.

Moreover, whilst prostitution was the predominate experience in Malaysia, there were other kinds of relationships which both these and other *gays* have had with foreign men both locally and abroad, which were not simply about a short term sex for money exchange. Helen, for instance, lived as a maid/mistress for six months with a man in Sabah, whilst two other *gays* who had previously worked in Saudi Arabia (usually referred to as just 'Saudi'), as a nurses assistant and beautician respectively, said they were approached by Arab men both as prostitutes and as potential mistresses and lovers. The main point is that *gays* often cited relationships with foreigners abroad, or more rarely in Jolo, whether or not they had personally experienced them, as being the inverse not only of the *callboy* relations in Zamboanga, Manila and Cebu, but of local *gay*-men relations more generally, which are often talked about in terms of what I have, following local terminology, called the *kursinada* scenario.

7.4 The *Kursinada* Scenario

The term *kursinada*, unlike the terms *call/service* and *billy/bennie boy*, does not mark out a certain category or type of relationship. Rather, the term *kursinada* might best be seen as indicating a specific intentionality or trajectory of desire, the appropriation of the English word "target", underlining the sense of *kursinada* as the active pursuit of a desired end, be it an object, person or response. In particular *gay/bantut* desire is said to be marked by the giving, sometimes the lavishing, of gifts on men. Moreover, an implicit link is often made, both in *gay*'s and men's narratives, between, on the one hand, *gays*' desire for men, which is expressed in terms of *kursinada*, and, on the other hand, mens desire for the gifts *gays* give to them, which are also referred to in terms of *kursinada*.

Thus, for example, a man related how he had become the object of a *bantut*'s desire (*kiyakursinadahan sin bantut*), and how, in attempting to seduce him, the *bantut* brought him to a department store and told him to choose the t-shirt which had

become the object of his desire (*t-shirt nakursinadaku*). Nor is this link fortuitous since, as I suggest below, it is precisely the *gay/bantut* who are considered to be repositories and purveyors of beauty and *istyle* (style). However, whilst the basic transactional element of the *kursinada* scenario is, in general, the same both in *gay*'s and men's representations, significant differences emerge with respect to the way in which the intentionalities expressed in these transactions are represented. I begin, first of all, with young men's perspective on the *kursinada* scenario.

In Jolo, because of *Bapa*' K.S.'s (the community councilman and head of the household with whom I was staying) concern for my safety and his desire to show himself a protecting host, I normally had two or three sleeping companions, usually *Bapa*'s two eldest sons (complete with pistol), in the community centre where I slept. One evening the eldest of the two, Bernard, with whom the pistol had been entrusted, did not show up and *Bapa*' felt he had to sleep with us, something which he was clearly not happy about. As it turned out, Bernard had spent the night drinking with friends, including a *bantut*, who later became known to me as Mother-Jon.

The next night, Bernard by way of apologetically explaining himself, told me about the previous night's party. He and two other friends had been invited to spend the night at Jon's house, singing and drinking. Jon - an amateur singer who performs traditional Tausug songs from time to time on local radio - doing most of the singing, and the others most of the drinking. Bernard went on to tell me the five "rounds" they had. That is, first they began with San Miguel beer, then they went on to Dark Horse (a stronger beer), then moved onto "Special" (a local brandy), then Ginebra (gin), and finally when all of that ran out they drank *tuba* (a locally produced and very cheap coconut wine). Describing with relish and great bravado each round in succession he continually commented, "*Grabi!* I can't believe we drank so much. Five rounds, five different kinds of alcohol (*alak*), and I was still able to stand up."

I commented that all that drinking must have been very expensive. Bernard just grinned and reminded me that he had been "invited" by Mother-Jon to drink. The implication, of course, was that Jon had paid for the beer, the spirits and the *tuba*.

According to Bernard, whenever Jon (who worked at one of the local cinema's as a ticket collector) had saved up extra money, he would invite several of his friends over for a night of drinking- "*magenjoy*". This in itself was not surprising as both married and unmarried men will frequently get together for long nights of drinking, to "*magenjoy*", at the home of whomever happens to have a bit of extra money to host such an occasion. Two things, however, set what Bernard described to me apart from the normal "rounds" of *barkada* (circle of usually same gender companions) drinking in which over the course of weeks and months, among relative peers, different persons will play host to their friends.

First of all, Bernard told me that whenever he would have these nights of "*enjoy*", they would drink and drink and then just go to sleep at Jon's house. That was the way to avoid trouble I was told. "Drink inside the house with friends, so that when you are finished and drunk, you can just go to sleep." So they would pull out a sleeping mat and all of them would sleep side by side, as is generally quite common. However, when they would lie down, Jon would touch and would try to kiss them, and would ask Bernard and his friends to kiss him, to which Bernard shuddered and made a face of disgust. Later on, once they were "asleep", Bernard said, Jon would lay down beside them, and masturbate and/or fellate them one by one. It was only then that John would leave them alone and let them rest.

Secondly, when I asked Bernard how often he slept at Jon's house he said it was only when Jon had the money. Anyways, he said, Jon would never invite them around to his house unless he had money because, according to Bernard, Jon would be too embarrassed to do that. While Bernard considered Jon a good friend and would, on other occasions, stop by to chat and/or sing with Jon, it was always Jon that invited Bernard to drink at his place. Never *visa versa*, like other of Bernard's friends with whom there was an implicit reciprocal relation. As he explained it to me, part of the fun with the *bantut*, was that if one was ever short of money one could always approach them and get cigarettes, beer, and sometime cash, clothing and other things from them. All they wanted was to hold and masturbate one's penis.

I was quite surprised at the way Bernard talked about what had happened because while I already knew from what *gays* had told me that this was a common scenario, Bernard had previously told me that anal sex with *bantut* was a serious sin. Further, while he had said that self-masturbation was quite common, he also had previously told me that one never masturbated or was masturbated by another man. When I asked him about this he went on to explain that while he did not like to be kissed and would certainly never kiss a *bantut*, nor would he ever have anal sex with a *bantut*, that if they got excited by masturbating or fellating him that it was fine by him as it felt good or even better than masturbating on one's own.

He repeated this same story several times to me. Sometime later, moreover, during a period of research in which I spent most of my days frequenting the various *gay* beauty parlours, the following incident took place. I arrived home in the late afternoon and was chatting informally together with Bernard's father and mother with whom I was staying. *Babu' Belen* (*Bapa' K.S.*'s wife and the eldest woman of the household) was asking me what it was I was finding out about the *bantut*. Bernard, who was on his way out of the house, jumped in and, to my surprise, in a loud voice told them that all the young unmarried men went there and that they went to the *bantut* so they could drink beer and could make easy money (*hikasin*) only that the *bantut* would ask if they could masturbate them. *Babu' Belen* said, "Well what do they say?" Bernard spread his legs and thrusting his hips forward pretended he was being masturbated and said, *lubak kaw!* - Go ahead! He finished his impression of someone being masturbated and coming, and started laughing. *Babu' Belen* who seemed to be embarrassed by all of this said to him, "Is that what you do then?" At which point, Bernard who appeared to me to be a bit irritated and chagrined, immediately stopped laughing and said, "I don't do it, its just what some of my friends say." *Bapa' Kim Sing* who had been silently listening meanwhile just got up, shook his head and said in disgust, "Stupid *bantut!*". I was left feeling quite embarrassed and was not quite sure what Bernard's intentions in relating all this was, and after that incident, always played down going to be with *gays* in the parlours. However, on my way out in the mornings, *Babu' Belen* would knowingly ask me where I was going, and just laugh to herself.

The point here is that the story contains a scenario which is commonly repeated in representations of *gay*-men relations. Firstly, men often present *bantut* as basically always ready and willing to engage in sexual play - so long as they have the money - so that they gladly take any man who approaches them. Thus, there is a clear sense in which the *bantut* are represented to be easy money (*hikasin*). This theme of a "quick buck" is commonly discussed, both by younger unmarried men who have *bantut* friends, as well as those older married men, who similarly explain the contrary behaviour of younger men who hang around the beauty parlours and go with the *bantut*, as a way of having a drinking spree, or obtaining spending money and other material goods.

Men's approach to the *bantut* is thus framed with monetary or other material advantage represented as being the primary if not the only intention, for getting close to the *bantut* and for "allowing" the *bantut* to touch them, a point made my men to stress that they never actively reciprocate the *bantut*, either sexually or materially in any way. In short, men present themselves as tricksters: those who are able to successfully play off the vanity and petty jealousies of the *bantut*, as well as their voracious, and potentially dangerous, sexual appetites, in order both to enhance their own masculinity and to turn a profit.

The way in which men talk about their relationships with *bantut* are paralleled in stories related to me of men who have been the *kursinada* of a wealthy, older married or widowed usually Christian Filipino women. This is especially the case with those few men who have had the opportunity to study outside of Jolo, either in Zamboanga or especially Manila. A good example is Ben, a young married man (in his late twenties) who at one point was studying in Manila, although he never completed his course of study and seemed to have spent much of his time courting his girlfriend. She was also a Tausug from Jolo who was studying Nursing in Manila, and they were forced to get married after she became pregnant.

Meanwhile, however, Ben apparently got to know the *kursinada* circuit in Manila, and according to him was frequently picked up by wealthy women who would take

him out for dinner, buy him clothes as well as give him money, and then would take him to hotels or to their homes so they could have sex. Ben's story does not appear to be all that unusual, and I have heard other first and second hand accounts of especially "college boys" (as they are also designated) who will sometimes become the regular *kursinada* of a woman or a gay, who often becomes responsible for helping with school bills, paying for books and supplies as well as giving them money for "enjoyment".

The main difference between men's representations of being the *kursinada* of women (in which men were effectively acting as *callboys*) and men's representations of being the *kursinada* of *bantuts*, is that whilst men never directly deny the pleasure they receive from *bantut* they always present the *bantut* as the sexual aggressors and themselves as reluctant or at best passive participants in sex (being fellated or masturbated by the *gays*), while in the case of the women (unless they were exceptionally old or ugly) they would describe in detail their pro-active part in sexual relations with the women. The point, once again, is that men portray themselves as having freely taken from the *bantut*, whilst not having actively given anything in return.

7.5 Working for Love: Gays on Casual, Steady and Live-in Relationships.

What men represent to be the voracious sexual appetite of the *bantut* in the *kursinada* scenario, obviously masks what is in gay representations a much more complex set of intentionalities. On the one hand, *kursinada*, may refer to *casual* relationships which are primarily seen as temporary sexual liaisons. More often, however, *kursinada* is expressed in terms of *true love* and *steady* relationships which involve and are concerned with the development of romantic and emotional attachments.

Casual relationships are associated with, and primarily talked about by, younger *gays* in their late teens/early twenties. However, as I suggest below, *casuals* also reflect the more pragmatic stance of older *gays* resigned to their inability to realize "true love" relations. Like *callboy* relationships, *gays* talk about casual relationship strictly

in terms of a desire for a come and a good time, although the relationships are much less formally negotiated. While strictly speaking *gays* do not pay men for sex in casual relationships, they are often the ones that provide cigarettes or beer for their companions. For instance, *gays* may go on night "patruls" along certain well known and fairly secure areas looking for men who are interested in sex and *magenjoy* (hanging out drinking), and if they find interested parties will go to the beach, meet at a friends home or as is often the case at the beauty parlour after hours (see chapter 7 below).

As in the *kursinada* scenario described by men, *gays* sometimes described these sexual encounters as a situation in which *gays* "work" (fellate or masturbate) the men, and are left to masturbate on their own. Nevertheless, other *gays* told me that if they are engaging in casual sex, they insist on at least being mutually masturbated. Although *gay* representations of casual sexuality retains the transgenderally-defined sense of being like women (expressed amongst other things in their desire to be anally penetrated), it is the desire for a good time and their insistence on being sexual reciprocated which is valorized in their accounts of casual relationships. This is illustrated by the discussion I had with Jimmy and Ismael, two *gays* in their late teens.

MJ: Where do you pick up boys now?

Jimmy: I go around with my friends in Ismael's place, and when I go around with them they have contacts and then I just go along. If someone calls you over, well of course you have to go, otherwise, well you know. [As they later explained, once one is known as a *gay* willing to engage in sexual play, there is much pressure to always respond, lest the boys lose interest and considers one to choosy, since the point of these relationships after all is sex.]

MJ: The boys you meet what are their ages?

Jimmy: 18 around same age some are a few years older, and some a few years younger. I don't like old ones, about up to 25. By 25 they are like older men now, but still strong.

MJ: Do you masturbate by yourself or do you just masturbate them?

Jimmy: Of course so you are satisfied. Sometimes I masturbate them and they masturbate me.

Ismael: If you have had contact with a boy and you do not come, it hurts, so we masturbate. Or if we find another boy then we have them masturbate us.

MJ: So the boys play with you when you are having sex?

Jimmy: Yes, sometimes it depends on their style, so long as they have **their** pleasure, but afterwards that's all there is.

MJ: And what gives you most pleasure?

Jimmy: Anal intercourse, when the boys penetrate us.

MJ: Do you ever have sex with other *gays*?

Jimmy: No, but if I am with a boy who is not my *type*, then I have them work me, masturbate me. But if I am with someone I like then I want them to penetrate (*silá in nag"penetrate" kaku'*) me. With sex it should be reciprocal (*subay magbaus*). If I masturbate them, they should masturbate me. I won't go along if all they want is for me to masturbate them.

Whilst younger *gays* are associated with casual relationships, it is primarily older *gays* and/or *gays* who have a regular income who are associated with "steady relationships". This is because, in contrast to what is seen as the purely sexual "*one night stand*" of *callboy* and casual relationships, steady relationships are said to require much more in the way of material and emotional investment. Also sometimes called *tunang* (boyfriend) or *magbana-bana-* (having a husband), steadies are seen as part of the transition into becoming a real *gay*, a move from the *crush-crush* or flirtatious relations of high-school into more mature relations, associated primarily with later high school and college. As one *gay* recounting his first "love" relationship told me,

Mar: And through that having a [sexual] contact with him again, I fell in love with him. And he treated me as a love. Like we were sweethearts. He waited for me at time for snacks and he would wait for my class to be out at six o'clock. . . During my time, its give and take, sometimes if he had, he would give. We were still students together. I understand him, he understands me, because we were still students. He had an allowance of about 300 pesos and me also and with our parents allowance, give and take, sharing, until we realize that we cannot, we do not love any more.

A key element in *gay* representations of these relationships is that not only are men often said to be involved in initiating the relationship, but they are also seen to be

reciprocally involved within the relationships. What is intended, moreover, is not simply balanced reciprocity as in casual relationships, but sharing and mutual understanding, the "give and take" of an emotional partnership. Indeed, it is this desire for, and investment in, what are regarded to be "true love" relationships, which informs the intentionalities *gays* express in terms of the *kursinada* scenario.

Jimmy: I have only had one *true love*. Just recently, 1990. We met at a disco. I *targeted* him, and approached him. He wanted to be *steady* not just have a *one night stand*. *Give and take* the two of us. When I have, I give money, if I need then sometimes I ask, but its not like our expenses are that great. We don't have *sex* every day, just weekends. If he has something to do, then we just have *sex* and then he leaves.

Steady or "true love" are also in *gay* representations, the relationships most clearly articulated in terms of cross-gender expression and which most completely realize the protocols of *gay* sexuality. That is to say, mutual sexual gratification is seen as part of the ideal of give and take of steady relationships: *gays* working their boyfriend in oral sex and, in turn, being worked by their boyfriends in anal intercourse. As one *gay* put it, "what makes us a woman is how we treat our boyfriend," whilst a *steady* is "someone who cares for you and who will treat you like a real woman." Live in relationships, where a *gay* and man set up a household together, although rarely reported by *gays*, represent the apex of possible *gay*-men relationships in this respect: an affirmation of a man's true affection and of a *gays* feminine identity.

It is precisely on the point of men's affection, however, that *gays* expressed the most disillusionment. Whilst *gays* would talk about their boyfriend's love for them and the give and take of their steady relationships, they would also just as frequently say that what boys were really after was just money.

Eva: I have a steady right now. A Notre Dame High School boy. He is very tall. 17 years old. On Saturday and Sunday he sleeps at my place because I am the only one in the house. I do have a maid, but at night she goes home. The boy is really in love with me, so that when I tell him we will not be together any more, he cries.

MJ. Do you support this boy?

Eva. Of course, I also give to him, but he has more money and belongs to a wealthy family. Mostly here in Jolo the teenagers they use the *gays*. These days they use the *gays*. They are practical, when they need money then they come around- that's the way it is. Its different from other places. The boys here are like *callboys* now.

Gays often pointed out the one-sidedness of their relation with men, even those reported to be their steady. Whilst they freely and heartily (*ihilas*) shared what they had with men, they knew men would come to them simply because they could *hikasin* - make a quick buck, have a free drinking spree or just have a pack of smoke. As Eva said, it is like they are *callboys*. However, in contrast to *callboy* relationships, not only did *gays* say it was they who financially supported (*gastu*) their *kursinada*, but they also said, that they were left to "work" (fellate or masturbate) the men, whilst they, that is the *gays*, were frequently left to masturbate on their own.

Thus, it is important to understand *steady* and *live-in* primarily as an idealized or imagined set of relations, since *gay* - men relationships, at least in this part of the Philippines, appeared to be fleeting and ephemeral. Most *gays* either talked about loves, steadies and live-in's in terms of now bygone relationships, or, as was also often the case, as something which was possible only somewhere else. It is not simply that *gays* are rarely able to actualize such relationships in practise, but rather that the language which *gays* used to talk about love is, in large measure, drawn from an imaginary American otherness.

Gay usage of the English term "love", for instance, resonates with what Jean-Paul Dumont (1992:195-96) has written about the discourse of love in Siquior in the Visayas. Dumont argues that for the townspeople, the use of the English word love signals a kind of performative appropriation of America: an attempted transcendence of their rural-proletarian roots, informed amongst other things by "comic book representations, Playboy-like imagery, and melodramatic radio renditions, not to mention all sorts of standard characterizations in love songs." (To which I would also add television and the cinema.) At the same time, love may also be used to

signal the deviant and the derisive, for instance the love of hospitality girls and adulterous affairs, which are set against the traditional local ideal of *gugma*. *Gugma*, Dumont suggests, is an equally idealized kind of construct but in contrast to "love" is used in the sense of "the agent that bound individuals to each other within actual families, parents to children and vice versa, siblings together, and spouses together."

In Jolo, the two local terms which are translated into the English word "love" are *kasi* and *lasa*.³ As I understand it, *kasi* is at least about a specific active-affective emotion. It is a passion which cannot but help be expressed, and sexual expression in particular is often explicit in *kasi*, as seen in the construct *anak kasi*, "love child" or "child of an illicit affair". *Lasa* has a different quality about it, and is associated with the sentiments and reciprocal obligations of compassion and pity (*ulung* and *luuy*). In a similar way to *gugma*, the construct *kasi-lasa*, in which the two terms are brought into relation, is an affirmation of a continuing affective orientation expressed in compassion and concern. The ideal of *kasi-lasa* is thus held up as exemplifying parent-child relations as well as wider community relations. It is the ideal expressed in the traditional notion of *lindu iban ramdam* (love and desire) through which a man and woman are said to pass into a sanctioned and blissful marital relation. Specifically, it marks the encompassment of passion within the domain of compassion and pity, which is symbolically marked by the instantiation of a gifting relation, between a man and his family and a woman and her family. By contrast, the *anak kasi* (the child of passion) is at the same time a *halam birayat*, that is, the child of an illicit marital union, an ungifted child.

Although the English term "love" may, at times, signal both these aspects of *kasi* and *lasa*, in popular usage *love* primarily signals unencompassed passion, desire and attraction. *Love* in this sense is often used with the term *romanca* (romance) which references both Tagalog and English films and love stories, and which, as often as not, are associated with the illicit and scandalous. The American *istyle* (style) of love and marriage, for instance, in which everyone was said to do their own thing, "for love", was contrasted with local traditions (*adat*) of love and marriage centred around the reciprocal obligations of *usba* and *waris* (the respective kindred of the bride and

groom). At times, American *istyle* was seen, by the poor particularly, as a necessary corrective to the spiralling increase of dowry amongst the wealthy who had, they suggested, corrupted the true intent of *adat*. Nevertheless, even in these juxtapositions, love, American style, emerges not as something which replaces the local ideal, but as a foil to what is regarded as a purer notion of compassion and concern to which the poor appeal.

In terms of *gay* discourse, the performative aspect of love and *romanca*, emerge as one part of their overall appropriation of beauty and *istyle*, as seen for instance in Helen's story about how she become known as Helen of Troy:

Afterwards, well I remember when I started to be called Helen. I was 15 years old. There was this "real handsome boy- a basketball player". Now for me what attracts people is my body, and I would wear underwear that came up past my hips, so that the boy said, 'it is good to have sex with you it's just like a woman'. But what was wanting was that he had a very small part. This was before I was called "Helen of Troy". He asked me what my name was. I said, 'Abdulhallim'. He said, 'lets go to the movie, I will call you Helen of Troy'. I asked, 'is this Helen of Troy beautiful?' 'Oh yes she is the most beautiful in the United States.' Roseanna Protesta was the actress. So I said, 'lets go'. So we went to the movie. *Ay dayang!* She was so beautiful, and there were many who fought over her. So what did I do, first time in my life, I kissed him, *lips to lips* as the movie was a *romanca*. So we kissed even with our tongues, and I had never tried that before. Until the end of the movie we kissed, and the people started clapping and said, 'Their kissing in the movie and they're kissing outside.' When I opened my eyes, all the people were on their feet and they were looking at us. I thought they were clapping at the movie, but they were actually looking at us because I was lips to lips with the boy. So they said, you will be baptized 'Helen of Troy', so until today I am known as Helen of Troy.

Love and *romanca* are also associated with the erotic in *gay* imagination. *Gays* commonly said, for instance, that when it came to "love making" they were much better than women, because as another *gay* put it, "*Gays* know how to play, *all around*". As he went on to tell me, "Sometimes I invite boys to the house, because no one is there, so I put on a [x-rated] beta (exclusively associated with foreign women)- and when on the beta they are love making- whatever they are doing on the beta, that's what I do to the boys."

But whilst *romanca* is clearly part of *gay* discourse on love, what *gays* intend by "true love" is also concerned with love as a kind of idealized binding agent. In an inversion of the popular imaginings and usage, it is America and American love, which is most associated by the *gays* with the give and take of steady and true love relationships, and which in their imagination is the place which comes nearest to realizing their desire to be treated as women. Here I quote from an extended passage of a *gay* life-history: a veritable poetic love collage, America, "free-love", and *gay* marriage stand apposite, sometimes layered on top of, the appeal to a common humanity, compassion and pity, and in which the desire to be cared for is contrasted with the realization that local men are only interested in money and that in the end they eventually leave for 'real women'.

Jo-Jo is in his early 40's. An educated professional he works in the civil service sector and is currently the manager of a subsidiary office. He also owns and operates a beauty parlour in town. We talked on several occasions both in his office and in the parlour during and after hours. He was very candid although he often told me that if I really wanted to know about *gays* then I ought to have a relationship with one.

M: When did you realize that you were *gay*?

J: Really realized? In high school, but it started while I was still in elementary. I wore clothes like a girl, and my sister told me I was a *bantut*. But I realized in high school, 'when I fell in love with a boy'.

M: What was your experience?

J: You know, I was just a kid, and that was my 'first experience' as a *gay*. I really loved (*lasa*) him. But then I didn't think, that at the last he will be lost from you. 'Part of the game'. 'Sometimes you lose, sometimes you win.' But I didn't think, because 'I'm in love.'

M: Did you have sexual relations.

J: Yes, I even stayed in his house with him. Sometimes he stayed at my place. So, 'sure shoot.'

M: Was that your first sexual experience.

J: NO, that was my first 'love experience', my first 'sex experience' was in elementary. 10 years old - 'shoot'. A person near our house, who lived near us. He wasn't that much older, just a friend. He wanted to 'test', see what it was like. It really hurt the first time. So after that time is when I started to feel sexual craving. Always looking, looking until high school when "*nafall-in-luv aku* - I fell in love'.

M: Are you the one that provides for your *kursinada* or do they also provide for you?

J. 'Frankly speaking, I am just *gay*.' Even women are abandoned by men. Even hostess, are 'tricked' (*natrick*) by men. 'What more a *gay*.' But 'I hope some day, some how', I can find a boy, even if I pay, at least he will return that which is good. Not money. 'You can find money if you want.' If you want to work you can. There is no one who doesn't know how to find work or doesn't know how to work if you have hands and feet and 'knowledge' you can find work. I give heartily, so they will get better- for instance if they are a drug addicts so they will get better. 'I have to convince him to go out of the drugs.' I have experience with that drug. There is no future with it. 'I have to get him out'.

Sometimes, we find a quiet place, where there are not a lot of people, where its just people we know, because I am sensitive, very sensitive and I easily get hurt, but with boys that can't be avoided. They lie. Even husbands and wives lie to each other. I accept that. Even when they are married, if the husband has no work, the woman will give money. That's like us, if you know him, has no work, no money, just from the high school. No work. Self supporting. You feel care/pity (*ulung*) for them. I want them to know me as a person, you know a human being, with thoughts and blood. I am a human being. But sometimes with boys, or even with other *gays*, they look down. But for me, I look up. I look at myself in the mirror, if I look decent, then I hope that people will look at me decently. When they come up to the house as a person then I ask them up as a person, but if they come up like an animal, then I treat them as an animal. We are the same, human beings. I am not proud, I just want to feel I am a person. *Gays* are taken for granted. 'I am just a women, in love, they eat.' Mostly with men, you rarely meet someone who is liberated. You understand, you are from America, there is a place there of free love.

I am puzzled now with my present boyfriend, he is still in high school, just a child. You have to adjust because he is younger, and then more inexperienced. He needs experience. I have passed so *pasensya* (I just let it go). So even if its 'hurting' you love him. OK, OK, until such time I make him leave, he will regret. Its not just because I give money, but I want to reform him.

'The *gay* has everything, knowledge', but even so, they are duped (*nadupang*) by boys/men. They are duped by men. They fall in love, but they are not accepted by man as girl. That's what I am looking for is a man who will really love (*lasa*) me because you are good not because of your money, never mind the money. One who will look for your good, will care. That's the one thing I am looking for. 'I've been looking'.

So everytime you fall in love, then they go to school in Manila, and when they come back then they have a wife, children. You have to accept. You

know, what I said, if you want people to look well at you, pay attention to yourself. 'You must understand yourself, if you want people to understand you. . .'

MJ: Are most of your *kursinada* younger or older?

J: Mainly young now, but when I was young I wanted an older person to take care of me, I had one once, really old, blow out, party. Now none. My *gay* friends are the same are the same level. It is hard to adjust if they are not level. 'Friends can understand, but never man, except you have to do what they want.'

MJ: What do *kursinada* want, sex and money only?

J: It depends, some want to drink, party, drugs, not heartily just because of money. They want *gay* because they want to drink, not heartily, just do because of money. There are some boys who just because of money, they pretend to care, you care for them, they like you because of your care for them, you have to care for them, in return there is also some concern, inward debt, a desire even if just a little, not exactly love, but pity because you do everything. If they are older 'matured-matured' then they also think. Most probably among the Tausug, if you know Islam, *bantut* is *haram* (forbidden). Muslim, conservative, at the same time, it is bad if *bantut* and men.

For me, deep inside, when I have a boyfriend I want him to be a success, at least at this moment, even if I am left, he gets married, at least I have helped him become a success. Its like growing a garden, when you plant a flower you want to see it grow. They enjoy, I enjoy.

Gays walang pagasa sa lalaki, there are no *gays* being wedded to men. [Not as] husband and wife but as a friend there are. I think I read in a magazine that a *gay* and a boy got married in the church [in America]. 'I don't know' 'But they pronounced as friends, not as husband and wife.' 'I'm not sure what part this was, but they got married with marriage contract.' That's nice, to have a life like that. Are there transplants now? Maybe, have you ever interviewed *gays* in Manila? In US, you go stay 5-6 months. Of course the States, but you have to have the money.

In the final part of this chapter I draw together some of the various strands of *gay*-men relationships as articulated by Jo-Jo and others and suggest a conceptual framework within which the differences, for instance, between true and false love and between the local Muslim world and America, might be usefully thought about in relation to *gays*' expressed transgenderal projects. Although I accept the point that each individual *gay*'s story reflects a highly subjective experience, I think that it is only by mapping out the larger transactional and symbolic relations between them and within which they are framed that one can begin to understand the meaning of various *gay* intentionalities.

7.6 Between Debts and Remembrances: The structure of gay "pathos".

The two primary axis along which gay-men relations can be mapped correspond to the two basic local transactional schemes; debts (*utang*) and remembrances (*panumtuman*), which I briefly summarize here. *Utang*, commonly translated debt or indebtedness, was defined by Mary Hollensteiner (1972: 66) in her seminal outline of Philippine transactional forms, as a type of contractual or balanced reciprocity: a version of Sahlins' (1974:168) economistic rendering of "the gift" as a social contract which asserts that debts are to be paid. However, while this definition may highlight its ideological intent, it elides both the historical reformulations and moral ambiguities which characterize present day relations of indebtedness. Thus, for instance, *utang* is often straightforwardly linked with various forms of commodity exchange and wage labour. Moreover, not only is profit often seen as accruing asymmetrically in wage labour and entrepreneurial enterprises, but also, as is more often the case, where *utang* takes the form of credit relations (such as in the *padjak*, the pawnshop) - it is seen to violate the local axiom, *di' makapaganak in sin* - "money cannot/should not bear children". This is not simply a local reformulation of the Islamic prohibition against usury (*gandariba*), but is a statement about the, in itself, socially unproductive power of wealth and money.

Remembrances (*panumtuman*) on the other hand, as I have suggested previously (see Chapter 3) are neither simply about material exchange (although that may be involved) nor social reproduction, but about the production of human sociality. In short, what *utang* signals is exchange directed towards the realization of material profit or return (*untung*), whilst *remembrancing* signals a form of social transaction directed towards the realization of reciprocally constituted or shared insides. Indeed, the local protocols suggest that a persons status (one's place in social memory) is not contained within the space of economic indebtedness, but is only realized through *remembrancing* relations. Thus, *remembrances* and debts might best be conceived, not simply in oppositional relation but in a potentially encompassing and hierarchical relation. This is the starting point for understanding the connections between exchange forms, gender status and sexuality in gay - men relations, which I summarize in schematic form in Figure 7.1 below.

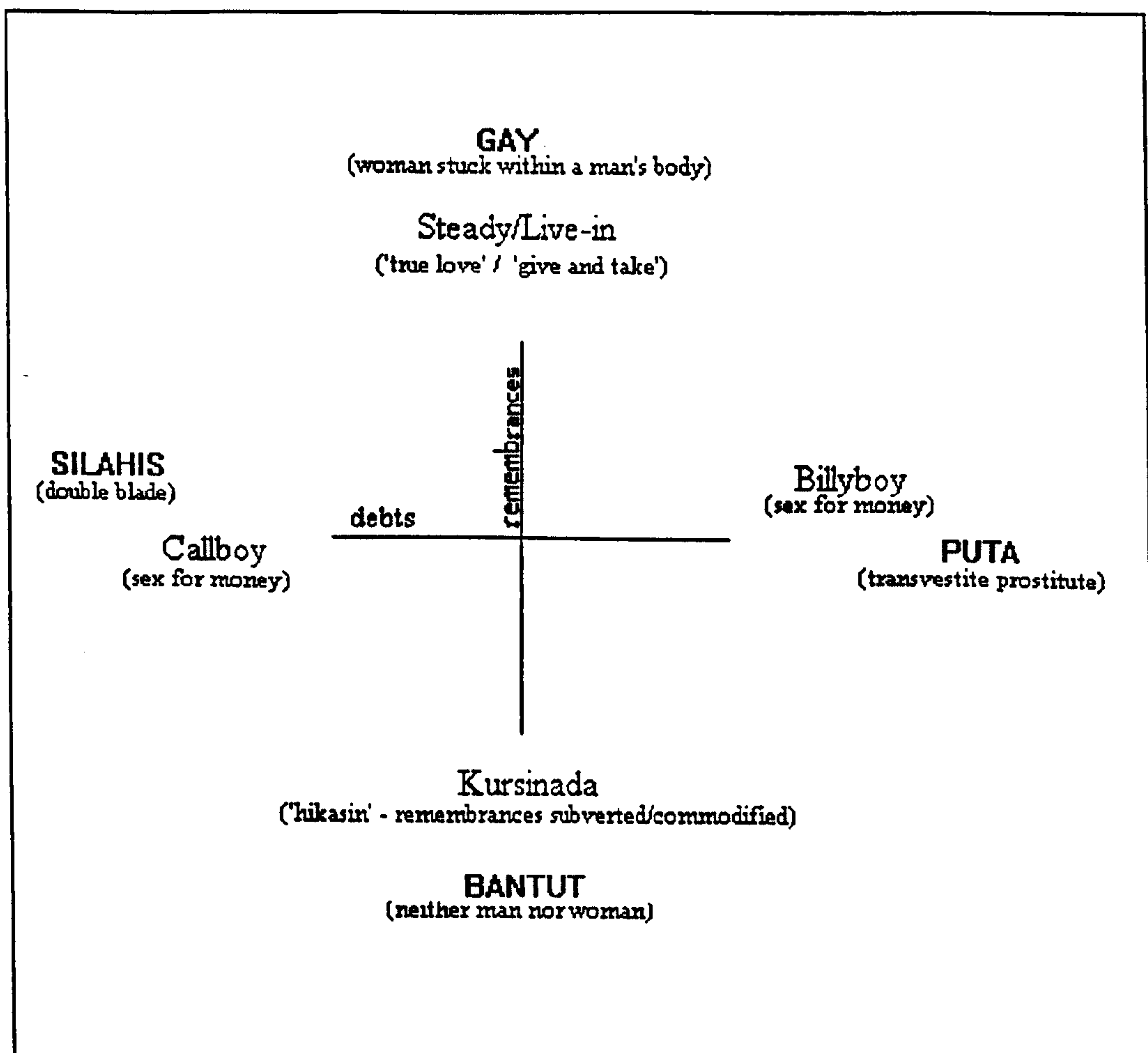


Figure 7.1 *Gay - men relations mapped out along the axis of debts and remembrances.*

Although never directly articulated as such, *callboy* relations clearly fit within what is otherwise designated, *utang* or debt exchange, in as much as they are commonly regarded by *gays* to be a straightforward commodity transaction in which money is exchanged by them with men for sex. Gays working in Sabah, Malaysia as *billy/bennie* boys, moreover, represent merely the inverse of this relation, in which money is exchanged by men for sex with the *gays*. In direct contrast to the commoditized exchange of call/service and bennie boy relations is the discourse of "true love" , mutual understanding and the give and take of idealized steady and live in remembrancing relations: the contrast between these two made even more explicit by *gays* when, as is more frequently the case, what they talk about is precisely being unable to realize these relations. As Jo-Jo says, .

'I hope some day some how', I can find a boy, even if I pay, at least he will return that which is good. Not money, 'you can find money if you want'.

and again,

That's what I am looking for is a man who will really love (lasa) me because you are good, not because of your money, never mind the money. One who will look for your good, will care. That's the one thing I am looking for. "I've been looking".

The sting for the *gays*, then, is that they are, at least by men, completely excluded from such remembrancing relations or to put it another way, their gifts are not recognized as such, but are continually translated and subverted through their commoditization by men.

On to these axis one can also map the gender implications for the *gays* of each of these transactional forms. On the one hand, as I have noted, call/service boy are perhaps the most ambivalent in terms of the local protocols of engendered sexuality. That is to say, both *callboy* and *gay* gender identities are, like the exchange form through which they are negotiated, subject to ambiguity (*gays* becoming like men, *callboys* becoming like female prostitutes or *silahis*, double-blades) since the sexual roles defined by the local protocols are potentially inverted in these relationships. Call/service boy relationships are thus defined, as it were, primarily in terms of sexual pleasure and not in terms of being/becoming like women. *Gays* would comment on these relations by saying, "*Grabi!*" or "*Grabi tuud*", an interjection which in this instance seemed to indicate the intensity of their sexual desire and lust (*biasan/ giyanahan*), which would lead them to engage in such liaisons. Again, as Jo-Jo puts it,

Once I am on top, I feel like I am paying only for the sake of sex, but when on bottom it feels really good. When they are on the bottom, its like they are just a hostess [a female prostitute]. If you're really in love then you should be the one to do the work [masturbate and fellate them]..

On the other hand, steady and live in relations are represented to be the relations within which they most fully realize their transgenderal identities, sexually and

otherwise. The link between a distinctly engendered sexuality and *remembrancing* was explicitly made by one *gay* who told me that his boyfriend had the night before penetrated him and left a *remembrance* (his semen) inside of him. Put negatively, however, men's duplicity and trickery is related by the *gays* to the fact that they are, "not accepted by man as girls", and that it is always "in the end", that men leave *gays* for "real women", get married and have children, who are also otherwise said to be *panumtuman umbul satu*, "one's greatest remembrance". This underscores the irony of *gay* references to themselves as "mothers" and statements about themselves being "wives not mothers" or "lovers but not wives."

There is a yet another aspect to this. Whilst steady and/or live in relations are sometimes represented as being college flings, in which *gay* and boyfriend are peers, another *kursinada* scenario involves older *gays* and younger "boys" as is the case with the relationship discussed by Jo-Jo above. This is sometimes referred to, although not by the *gays* themselves, as *ipatan*. The root word *ipat* means to take care of something or someone. Affixed as *ipatan*, the word either refers to a domestic helper or a pet, i.e. some kind of tamed animal. Used in reference to a *bantut*-men relationship, it clearly has a connotation of a man being kept as a *bantut*'s pet, and/or of the *bantut* being used by the boy as a maid. In what, at least among women, is probably the most commonly recited *gay*-man scenario, the *bantut* are said to "adopt" a teenager in high school for a time, anywhere from several months to several years, and in some cases the boys are reported to spend time living in the *bantut*'s home. In exchange for helping with school bills or special school occasions; buying clothing, providing their meals, or providing money for snacks, movies, cigarettes, etc., the boy lets the *bantut* masturbate or fellate them.

Although *gays* obviously distant themselves from the derogatory implications of *ipatan*, in other respects the scenario does fit with what especially older *gays* such as Jo-Jo told me about their relationship with younger boys. The language they use, moreover, often resonates with what might otherwise be regarded as parental, if not maternal sentiments;

"For me, deep inside, when I have a boyfriend I want him to be a success, at

least at this moment, even if I am left, he gets married, at least I have helped him become a success. Its like growing a garden, when you plant a flower you want to see it grow. They enjoy, I enjoy.

This is significant for non-*gays*, since in addition to everything else *gays* are seen to violate the protocols of trans-generational sexuality. As one man put it, "What is the one food which parents would never share with their children, *sulga' dunya*- heaven on earth." For the *gays*, however, it makes doubly tragic the duplicity and trickery of men, for not only are they denied a reciprocally recognized identity as would be lovers or wives, but also the reciprocal compassion and obligations which are said to characterize parent-child relations. This is at the heart of *gay* pathos, and one of the things which *gays* express most concern, and at times regret, about is not having any "remembrances" or not being "remembered" (see also Matthews 1990:57).

Having mapped out *gay* relationships along the axis of local transactional schemes, it is important and interesting to map out the particular worlds, imaginary and real, with which they are associated: relationships abroad identified as affirming *gays* expressed transgenderal projects, whilst relationships at home seen as denying and subverting these projects, as summarized in Figure 7.2

On the one hand, Jolo is associated with the duplicity and trickery of local Muslim Tausug and Sama men, the continual subversion of *gay* gifts and the circumscription of *gay* transgenderal identity in terms of the *bantut*; that is, impotent men and unrealized/defiled women. Note, for instance, Jo-Jo's (who is himself a Muslim) comments about the local Muslim Tausug, who regard *bantut*-men relationships as *haram*. Zamboanga, Cebu and Manila (and by extension Christian Filipino men) whilst regarded by local *gays* as being freer in terms of homosexual contact, are, both by virtue of the potential kinds of sexuality and the transactional forms with which they are associated, regarded with all the gender ambiguity which attaches to the term *silahis* (double blade). Manila, for instance, is commonly associated by the *gays* as a place where provincial *gays* may be taken unaware by the so-called *pong-piyang* or incestuous *gays*. *Gay*-men relations in Sabah, Malaysia and/or Saudi Arabia, on the

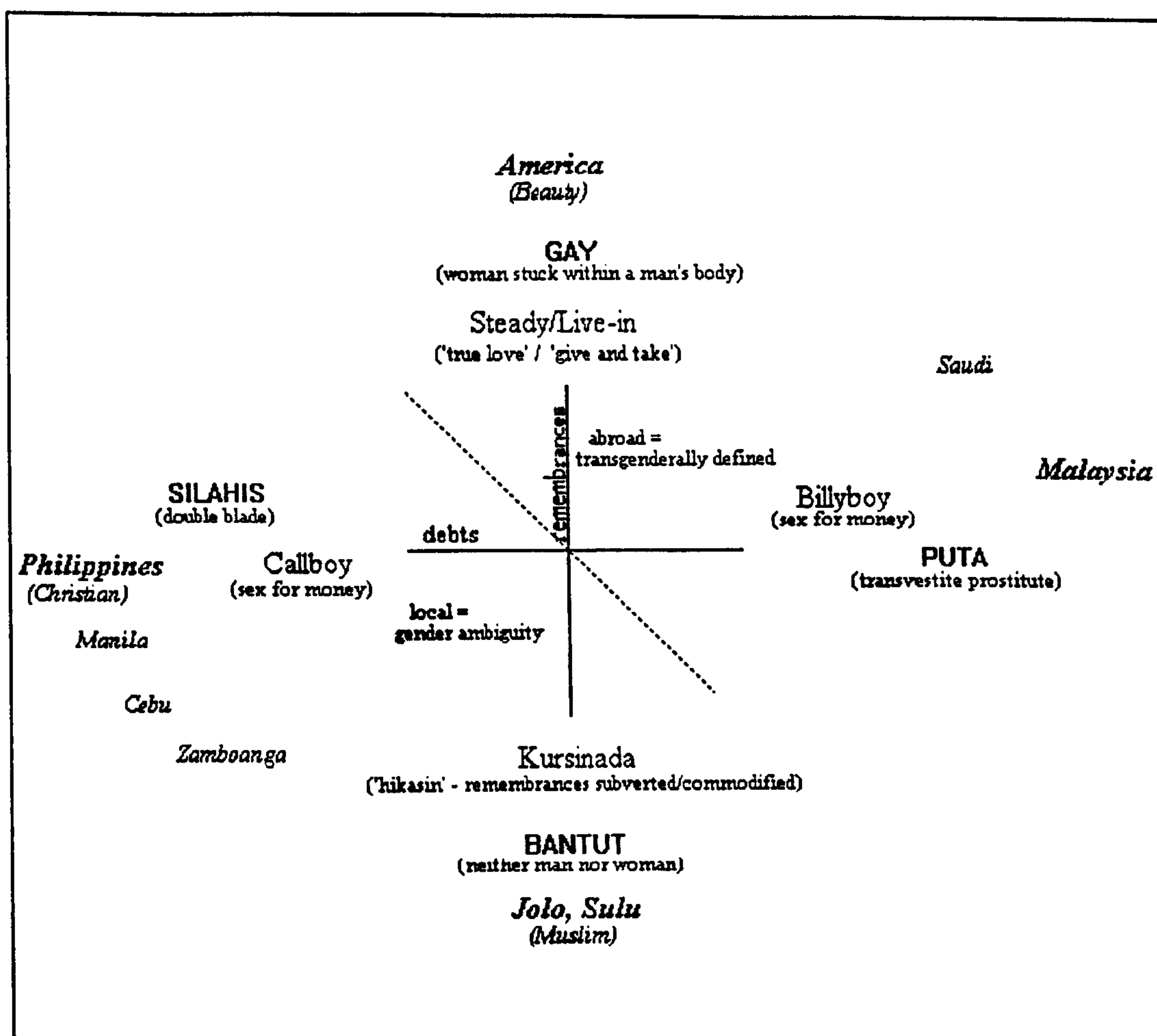


Figure 7.2 *Gay - men relations mapped out in terms of the real and imagined worlds with which they are associated.*

other hand, whilst similarly constructed in terms of *callboy* transactional forms, retain, at least in *gay* representations, the clearly identified penetrated and penetrating sexual roles which marks them out as the transgenderal or female partner. Whilst this may be read simply in terms of prostitution, *gays* perceive a potential there for the conversion of such relationships into "true love" and remembrancing relations. Thus, relationships abroad are identified as affirming *gay*'s expressed transgenderal projects, whilst local relationships are seen as denying and subverting these projects.

Moreover, just as persons frequently see Sabah and Saudi as rungs on the ladder leading up to America, in terms of the most desirable place to work and live abroad, so too, in *gay* imagination, America represents the apex of all possible relationships conceived abroad. This imagined American *gay* universe, signalled amongst other things by the appropriation of the term *gay*, is not about a shared homosexual identity

and solidarity with *gay* Americans. In fact as I noted in Chapter 4 above, local *gays* reacted with disgust to the suggestion that *gays* in America exchanged what they regarded to be penetrating and penetrated roles. Nor is it about actual relationships with "real men" in America, since unlike Sabah and Saudi Arabia, there were no *gays* living in Jolo who either had first hand or close second-hand experience in America or with Americans.

The point is, as I have shown, America and American love, like American *istyle* (style) provides both the conceptual space as well as much of the vocabulary for the realization and articulation of a locally defined (yet locally unrealizable) *gay* transgenderal identity. As will become clear in the final section of the thesis, moreover, there is a conjunction here both between *gay* discourse on love and *gay* practices of beauty as well as their position as symbolic mediators of a global, primarily American defined otherness. Indeed, somewhat paradoxically, the beauty contest -which might be seen as an enactment of their American fantasy - is, on the one hand, considered by the *gays* to be the place, as one *gay* put it, to "show the world that I am really a woman". At the same time, however, it is also within the beauty contest (as in the beauty parlours) that they are repeatedly constituted (by the audience) as those who are *overexposed* to, and transformed by, cultural otherness, so that they have become the impotent and defiled *bantut*.

It would be disingenuous and misleading, however, for me to suggest that *gays* are simply the tragic figures in all of this. Certainly, men's representations of *gay* naivety is undermined by the fact that *gays* are fully cognizant of men's trickster scenario. As one of my first *gay* informant told me at the very outset, "men think they are fooling *gays*, but *gays* know they are being fooled." While men present themselves as being in control of and basically able to manipulate *gays* at their whim, my *gay* friends continually told me that they choose whom would be their *kursinada*. Not every "boy" is accepted. "If a boy who is not "clean" comes and wants me to *kursinada* him, I say go take a bath, you are not handsome." This sense of being as it were one step ahead of men's trickery, whilst allowing boys or men to think they are in control of the situation, demonstrates the multi-dimensional character of *gay*

representations and intentionalities.

On the one hand, what are otherwise considered to be casual relationships often represent *gay* attempts to negotiate some form of parity in their relationships with men. More than that, however, they must be read in terms of the sense of freedom and celebration, if not celebrity status, which gays experience as recognized masters of style. In fact, as Cannell (1991:365) notes, gays refer to their power of seduction in terms of 'exposing my beauty', and it is perhaps not too much to suggest that part of the attraction of gays for young men is precisely the gay's acknowledged transformational abilities. On the other hand, not only do *gays* acknowledge their ability to act as skilled manipulators of young men, for instance, flattering their good looks, making comments about the probable size of their penis, etc., but also note that, as *gays* say, "a good man can always be bought". As Mar told me about his current relationships,

I can say that I am wise enough. Because I know that guys took an advantage, and they can just get, get and get from you. And, for me I am wise now. Like that, I don't give to them, if I also do not get something from them. I give them some clothes or they ask me for some clothes, OK I'll give you this clothes but you also have to give me a fair exchange for it (*Gantihan mu isab*). Or I give you some money, then you have to having a sex with me. I am alert to giving money. Because, once I know, in and out the life of a *gay*. I can say that I am too educated in terms of that, I have experienced much having a relationship with a guy. I also take advantage of them. Wise, yah I am wise now. Or when I don't have any boyfriends here, I contact the guy, just to feed my human wants, my desire. I give them what they want.

What emerges from Mar's account, however, is not simply a picture of parity, but a bittersweet picture of empowerment. That is to say whilst *gays* clearly do experience a measure of power in their relationships with men and are thereby enable to negotiate their pleasure, it is their inability to convert what is clearly their superordinate position in a relationship of economic indebtedness into the hierarchically encompassing relation of love (*kasi-lasa*) and *remembrance* which informs and structures the pathos of *gay* representations.

Endnotes

1. Whilst there is much correspondence between Whitham's (1992) and Mathews' (1990) papers and the description of gay-men relations I present here, it is important to note some important points of divergence and disagreements with them. On the one hand, Whitham characterizes all gay-men relations in Cebu as being "*callboy*" relations, which I think, given my own data on gay relations, glosses over much of gay representations which clearly differentiates between strictly sexually oriented relationships mediated by cash payment and other romantic interests which are negotiated through other forms of gifting arrangements. Matthews' on the other hand, writing within the context of what he calls homosexual prostitution in the Ermita red-light tourist district of Manila, is writing about a situation which is not necessarily typical of Filipino gay-men relations, and a more apt comparison may be with *bantut* experience in Sabah as *billyboys*. Thus, it is perhaps not surprising that there is a wide range of gender identities proffered by the boys, some identifying as transgender-homosexual *bakla*' (Tagalog for *bantut*), but others still retaining a male identity (which as I suggest most *callboys* in the Philippines do) whilst adopting the term *gay* in this context. Importantly, whilst Matthews' describes all of these as engaging in homosexual prostitution, he does emphasize that for the *billyboys*, their is a continuum of intentionalities from the strictly mercenary (commercial) to the affectively inclined (regular) along which the *billyboys* place themselves.

2. In part what I outline in this chapter concerning gay-men relations can be related to gay-men relations in Great Britain, particularly in the 19th century before the 'masculinization of gay men', where a distinction has been drawn between 'full-time' often middle and upper class homosexuals, who were seen as effeminate and defined like 'women', and 'part-time' homosexuals, mainly lower/working class men, who out of economic necessity, were paid sexual partners of the upper class homosexuals (cf. Weeks 1989; Gough 1989). However, as with the local situation, there was a much different symbolic and cultural world at play in the way these relations were imagined, and such apparent correspondances do not necessarily imply a kind of universal historical trajectory in the development of gay identity. Indeed of particular interest, given what I argue later in the chapter about the place of America in the construction of gay-men relations in the Philippines, are the arguments put forward by Coward (1994) in a recent B.A. dissertation completed at UCL, who suggests that Ancient Greece was crucial to the way in which the upper class homosexual men in Britain imagined and constructed their relationships with working class men as an expression of platonic love.

3. Kiefer (1972b) has distinguished these two as disinterested love (*lasa*) and possessive love (*kasi*.) There are several problems with these translations not least of which the culturally specific semantic range of interestedness and therefore disinterestedness as well as notions of possession. I think it is much more useful to think about *kasi* and *lasa* in terms of the kinds of reciprocal sociality which each are seen to entail.

***Beauty and Power, Part III:
Beauty, Consumption, Political Practise
and Gender Transformations.***

Chapter 8. On Beauty and Vulgarly: Beauty Parlours, Gay/Bantut Beauticians and the Space of Beauty.

8.1 Introduction.

In this chapter I present a mainly descriptive account of beauty parlours in the town of Jolo, Sulu, which provide both a primary means of livelihood for many *gays* and, perhaps more importantly, an important locus of identification and affiliation. In the first part of the chapter I look at some of the economic and organizational aspects of beauty parlours. Next I consider work as a beautician in terms of *gay* discourse on education and professional occupation, which is an important part of *gay* attempts to define - in opposition to the backward, provincial and vulgar - an image of beauty. In the latter part of the chapter I explore the symbolic and interactional space of the transvestite-*gay* beauty parlours, both from the perspective of the *gays*, who clearly experience a sense of empowerment working within the parlour, and from the perspective of the wider community, who whilst acknowledging and celebrating *gays*' potency in making beauty, clearly regard this power as something which must be contained: *gays* valorised as at once necessary for beauty, but also as those who are potentially defiling.

Although the emphasis of this chapter is primarily synchronic, it is important to note that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of beauty parlours since the early 1970's, from a maximum of three parlours almost exclusively owned/operated by women to 15 beauty parlours, which are almost exclusively owned/operated by *gays*. Most of the parlours have opened since the beginning of the 1980's (see Table 8.1). These historical facts have at least two important implications. On the one hand, as I discuss below (8.3), the rise in the number of beauty parlours is associated with the increasing status and sophistication of *gays* in the town of Jolo and has important implications for *gay* social trajectories. On the other hand, however, as I discuss in the concluding chapter (10.2), the rise in the number of beauty parlours and the perceived increase in the number of *gay/bantut* men, with which they are associated, are variously linked by persons with the political violence of the last

twenty years. I raise this point here in order to signal the fact that the particular engenderment and circumscription of the *gay/bantut* which emerges, amongst other places, in respondents answers to a survey-questionnaires on *gay/bantut* beauticians and beauty parlours, is critically tied to, and must be read in terms of, recent historical events.

Table 8.1 Profile of 12 Parlours in Jolo[#].

	Location	Year Opened	Full- Time	Part- Time
Jennifer’s House of Unisex	In Town	1975	1	3
Eva’s Beauty Parlour	Port Area	1978	2	2
J&J Parlour	Port Area	1980	3	
Jo-Jo’s Elegance	In Town	1980*	5	1
Jun’s Parlour	In Town	1981	1	
Rhoda’s For Men and Women	Port Area	1985	2	2
JR Parlour	Port Area	1985	2	2
Rheas For Men and Women	In Town	1986	3	
Pias Hair 2000	In Town	1986	5	2
Danti’s Parlour	Port Area	1988	2	1
A&M Cartimar	In Town	1991	3	
Pinky’s Parlour	Bus-Bus	1992	1	
Total			29	13

[#]Table 8.1 excludes three parlours which I did not obtain this data from.

*1980 is when Jo-Jo opened his first parlour, although it was still in the "Port Area" at that time.

8.2 Beauty Parlours: Economics and Organization

There are approximately 50 *gay* beauticians (29+ full and 13+ part-time) working in the 15 parlours in Jolo. Parlours are open seven days a week, usually from around seven or eight in the morning to between five or six in the afternoon, but most beauticians observe fairly flexible working hours. As long as there are at least one or two beauticians in the parlour, owners are typically relaxed about the number of days and hours their employees work. Beauticians are rarely in short supply, and in some cases the primary concern of parlour owners is with distributing the work equally between several employees.

Being a beautician is, amongst other things, seen by the *gays* as an easy way to make money: their relative economic success highlighted in those remarks sometimes made by other persons about *gay/bantut*'s behaviour being just a style or way of acting in order to make money. Beauticians are paid on a percentage per customer basis in which the beautician receives fifty percent and the parlour owner fifty percent, who with few exceptions are also *gay* beauticians. Table 8.2 below summarizes the range and cost of service typically provided by parlours, although there were slight variations in price from parlour to parlour.

Table 8.2 Services and Price Range offered in Beauty Parlours in Jolo.*

Services	Price Range	Services	Price Range
Trim	15	Hair Colouring	75
Trim w/ blower	20	Hair Colouring (special)	110
Style w/ blower	10	Spiral (long curls)	70-100
Manicure/ Pedicure	20-25	Brush Up (curls on top)	35
Make-Up/Hair-Do	60-80	Skin Cleansing	50-60
Cold Wave	50-60	Skin Bleaching	60-70
Cold Wave (special)	100-120	Hot Oil	75

*(50 pesos = 1 pound)

Although most of their work is trimming hair (15-20 pesos per customer), beauticians estimated that their earnings fluctuated on average between 200 and 500 pesos a week depending on the time of year and the number of days and hours they worked in a given week (see Table 8.3). Many of the *gay* beauticians also worked outside the parlour doing *home service*, that is, making house calls. Such work is sought after by *gays* not only because they can keep all of their earnings, apart from the cost of supplies such as perming lotion which they usually obtain on credit from the parlour, but also because they can charge as much as double or more the normal price.

Parlour owners, although having to pay rental and other expenses, which in the case of *in town* parlours (see Table 8.1 and section 8.5) may run to 1500 pesos a month, are usually able to earn fairly substantial sums of money. Not only do they take half of all the beautician's shares working in their parlours, but also they monopolize larger home service contracts such as wedding parties, for which they may charge upwards of 3000 pesos for *make-up/hair-do* of 10 persons, although often beauticians from their parlours will assist them and receive a share in line with the 50-50 division in the parlours. While 7000 pesos per month is clearly exceptional (see Table 8.4), 1000 pesos per month is most likely underestimated. A figure fluctuating between 3000-5000 pesos is probably a fair estimate, placing their income on a similar salary scale to that of lower-middle/middle income professionals such as teachers and public office managers.

Obtaining work in a parlour usually takes the form of an informal apprenticeship. *Gays* begin hanging around (*nagistandby*) the parlours during high school or college, and some begin to help in a casual way, sweeping and cleaning the parlour floors, etc., although they are not paid to do such work. Later they may be taught to do manicures and pedicures, which are not considered to require much skill. If there is a need for extra help they may become a regular fixture. Eventually they may be asked to cut someone's hair, and if successful may continue in that capacity. It is at this point that they will begin to be paid on the same basis as the other beauticians. All of the current beauticians said they began their careers in this way. A few of the

older *gays* amongst the owner-operators learned in Manila or Cebu working with well known (to the *gays* at least) beauticians, which adds to their authority and prestige, and more recently a few of the wealthiest, such as Eva, Jo-Jo and Jennifer have been able to visit Manila for special beauty training seminars or consultancies run by various cosmetic manufacturers to promote their products. Most of the younger beauticians, however, gained their experience working in local parlours or in Zamboanga.

Although there was no connection made between the two, what I have called an informal apprenticeship fits well within a more widely recognized traditional *guru-mulid* (teacher-student, literally disciple) scenario, in which the novice, who sometimes live with the guru, performs unpaid service (*bakti*) for the guru in exchange for instruction. This is perhaps most typical of the transmission of largely esoteric knowledge-power (*ilmu*'), but it also extends to the dissemination of what would otherwise be regarded as more technical knowledge (although the two were traditionally never separate) possessed by various *panday* (ritual specialist/craftsperson) such as *panday bay*, (carpenter/house builder) *panday magsasal* (blacksmith) or *panday manganak* (midwife). As with traditional ritual technology, instruction in the beauty parlours is largely a process of observation and imitative participation. The major difference is that unlike the *guru-mulid* relationship, a *gay* does not present the parlour owner with any kind of *paltanda*' (symbol of intent, usually gold), and there is a community dimension to work in a parlour which is largely absent from the individual relationship of *guru* and *mulid*.¹

The relationship with the parlour owners and amongst younger beauticians is often talked about within the idiom of familial relationships. Older *gays* within the parlour cast themselves as parental figures, frequently telling me that as more *matured* and *experienced gays* they had to *advise* younger *gays* about boy's foolishness, about saving money, using drugs and carrying themselves with respect. Parlour owners also saw themselves as benefactors to younger *gay* beauticians, supporting them in crisis. In most cases meant lending money to them, sometimes on a five-six basis, in

which the borrower returns six pesos for every five borrowed, although there were two cases where a parlour owner paid for, or at least substantially contributed to, the seven day death celebration (*paghinang tu, pitu*) of *gay* beauticians who had been working for them: expenses for which the deceased's family is usually responsible.²

This is the other side to the use of the term *mommy*, especially as used by *gay* beautician employees with reference to older parlour owners, although the familial idiom is drawn both in terms of parent-child and sibling relations. As one of the parlour owners put it, "They should act as one - (*subay maghambuuk*). They should be like sisters and brothers."

The picture of "family" which *gays* in parlours attempt to project, however, must be considered alongside the fact that there is a considerable movement of beauticians between parlours prompted by the fall out amongst beauticians and between beauticians and owners over money, as well as reportedly, over men.³ Moreover, beauty parlours are a focal point for other *gays* who tend to form cliques centred around the particular parlour where they normally hang out, and there is a good deal of intra-parlour rivalry focused, amongst other things, around beauty contests and/or other fashion/talent shows in which *gays* from different parlours sponsor particular men, women or *gay* contestants.

The main point, however, is that parlours not only provide a decent income for many *gays*, but also a primary locus of identification and group affiliation. This is especially important for *gays* whose families are, or remain, unaccepting or hostile, for some of whom, the parlour almost becomes a second home. Such for instance was the case with one of the beauticians working at Pias Hair 2000. Although this particular *gay* had always maintained that her parents were OK about her *gayness*, she was also somewhat reluctant and reticent to discuss them and certainly made no suggestion that I should ever meet them. Several of the *gays* working in the parlour subsequently told me that her parents strongly disapproved of her *gayness* and would frequently be angry with her. They said this was the real reason she slept in the parlours and not, as she had previously told me, that it was the best way of making contact with boys.

Table 8.3 Profile of Employee-Beauticians from 2 Parlours.

Age	Ethnic Affiliation	Education	Age when started working?	Estimated Daily Earnings	Previous, Other or desired work.	Living where and with whom?	Financially supporting/ contributing to whom?
21	Tausug	Some College	20	30-35	Helped out in brothers bakery	Brother's family	Brother
21	Tausug- Bisaya'	High School	16	50-60	Previous experience in on his own Sabah	Mother, now on his own	No one at present
22	Tausug	Some College*	15	30-50	None	Parents	Parents
22	Tausug	A.B. Psychology	21	50-60	Wants to be a teacher	Sister	Sister
23	Tausug	BS.Education	21	50-60	Wants to be a teacher	Auntie	Auntie
23	Tausug	Some College	16	30-50	None	Mother	Mother
24	Tausug	Some College*	16	30-50	None	Parents	Parents
25	Tausug	Some College*	20	50-60	Wants to be a teacher	Parents	Parents/ boyfriend
29	Tausug	Some College	17	50-60	None	Parents	Parents
31	Tausug	High School	20	30-50	None	Parents	Parents
38	Tausug	Elementary	18	30-50	Previous work farming	Sister	Sister

Table 8.4 Profile of Beauty Parlour Owners/Operators.

Age	Ethnic Affiliation	Education	Training	Previous or other employment	Estimated Income	Living Where/ With?	Supporting
29	Tausug	Some College	Experience	None	3000	Parents- parlour	Parents/ sisters
31	Tausug	College Graduate	Experience	Teacher; Worked in Saudi	2500	Parents	Parents
31	Tausug	High School	Experience in Zambo	None	2500	Parents	Parents
33	Christian- Tausug	High School	Experience in Manila	None	?	Father or parlour	Sister in school
34	Tausug	High School	Seminar in Zamboanga	Barter Trading	5000	Uncle	Parents/ Uncles Kids
36	Tausug	High School	Experience	Prostitute in Sabah	?	Parents	"family"
38	Tausug	College Graduate	Seminars in Manila	Postmaster	7000	Own Home	Nephew/ boyfriend
39	Tausug	High School	Seminars in Manila	None	3000	Own Home	Only if they ask
42	Tausug	High School	Experience	None	1000	Brother's family	None
44	Tausug	Some College	Experience	None	1000	Parents	Parents
45	Tausug	High School	Seminars in Manila	None	3000	Own Home	
49	Bisaya' (Joloano)	Some College	Experience in Manila	None	2500	With Relatives	Sharing Expenses
55	Bisaya' (Negros)	High School	Experience	Domestic helper	4500	By Herself	No

*These individuals do not own the parlour, but are the principle operators.
#Maphar and Ami were for a while joint partners of the A&M parlour although they later had a falling out over money, so Maphar left to work for Rhea.

8.3 Beauty Parlours and Gay Social Trajectories.

Although some *gay*'s families remain unaccepting, for other *gays*, many of whom have at some time or another worked in the beauty parlour, it is their contribution to the household economy, often in contrast to other unemployed siblings (particularly young unmarried brothers) which, as I noted in Chapter 6, allows them to negotiate a place within their home. There is a further aspect to this, however, in as much as there is a general shortage of available work in town, and the work which is available (as manual labourers, tricycle drivers, shop assistants or coffee shop servers) is considered to be menial and demeaning both by youth and parents alike. Youth are much less reluctant about working if it is in a professional occupation, such as teaching and the civil service, and it is only young unmarried persons from the poorest households who are generally willing and actively encouraged to work in low-paid, non-professional jobs.

By contrast, work in the beauty parlour is not considered menial work, but is seen to require special talent and ability. Although persons sometimes said that the *bantut* simply pretended to be *bantut* in order to find employment in the beauty parlours, the ability to make and create beauty was seen, both by the *gays* themselves and more generally, to be an inherent part of being *gay/bantut*. As it was sometimes put, "*Amuna in talent sin manga gays, nagbebeauty*." "That is the talent of the *gays*-to make things beautiful." Moreover, in the survey of beauticians and parlour owners which I conducted in Jolo, when asked why it was they became beauticians, most *gays* said that compared with work as domestic helpers or as bar and coffee shop maids, which 20 years ago appears to have been the major *gay* occupations at least in the town of Jolo, being a beautician not only provided a decent income, but also a respected almost *professional* position within the community.

This is illustrated by the case of Maphar (also known as Mar), sometime partner in the A&M Cartimar beauty parlour and a former elementary school teacher. Maphar told me that one of his primary financial obligations was to his parents, and indeed, his father, who tactfully glossed over any knowledge of Maphar's sexuality, told me

that Maphar had always made a positive contribution to the household. For Maphar, however, the sense that being a beautician had a semi-professional status was importantly linked to his families acceptance of him as a *gay*. Maphar's father is a teacher and he was expected to follow suit. However it seems that he dropped out of high school for a time and started work as a beautician. Describing this experience he told me,

I learned this kind of work, cutting hair, when I was still in third year high school. Just to earn for my daily expenses, so I tried to learn. I was staying with my sister at that time. My eldest brother did not want me to be a *gay*. "If possible, don't be a *gay*." But I explained it to them, "why do we have to deny what I am." They hit and beat me, just for what I am, because I was now working in the parlours. They wanted me to finish my study. Yes, I knew I had to, but I also had to do this kind of work. I needed the extra income to feed my extra wants. Then he scolded me and asked, "can you cut my hair?". I expected him to treat me like some kind of animal just so I would change. But he asked me to cut his hair and I said yes, and then he told me he accepted me as a *gay*. . .

As he later told me, it was not simply that his brother came to respect him when he saw that he was making money and supporting himself but also that he was seen to be doing something useful and constructive. Maphar eventually finished his degree in education having passed a scholarship examination to study at the Mindanao State University, and had spent sometime working as a teacher in nearby island. Recently he had left the teaching profession, and had started the beauty parlour with his first cousin (his mother's sister's son). As Maphar saw it, being a beautician was akin to other professional occupations:

Some say the *gays* are artificial [that is just pretending], but we can also make. What I mean is, the progress of the world depends also on us. Because through our association [professions], there are many *gays* in the military, there are *gays* also in politics- one of the senators is *gay*-, in different sectors of the world there are *gays*. There are teachers, there are many kinds of associations. And through that also, some [are] also beauticians, we can make beauty. We can make an ugly girl beautiful.

At the same time, however, a growing number of beauticians said they only worked in the parlours to support themselves whilst going to college to obtain professional qualifications, with a view to a career as teachers or civil servants: compare for

instance the educational qualifications of older parlour owners/beauticians with that of younger beauticians (Tables 8.3 and 8.4 above). A large part of the inter-parlour gossip often consisted of challenging or questioning other *gays*/beauticians educational qualifications or lack thereof, emphasis placed not just on the possession of a college degree but also on the quality and to a lesser extent on the place where the qualification was obtained. Even for uneducated *gays* - some of whom suggested that the *lack of unity* amongst the *gays* was primarily caused by competition amongst those who considered themselves to be *educated/professionals* -to have at least one person working in, or associated with, the parlour who was studying or had completed a college education was extremely significant.

Another aspect related to the discourse of the educated-professional concerned clothing and dress style. In particular, *gays* often sought to distance themselves from what they called the *bantut suruy* - the overdone, *from the hills or hinterland gay* - characterized not only as uneducated but also as broadcasting their ignorance by wearing excessive amounts of make-up, gaudy costume jewellery and mini-skirts that had gone out of style. Whilst younger *gays* were seen as more likely to dress in this manner as part of the coming out scenario, which many older *gays* said they themselves had gone through and grown out of, a growing number of younger *gays*, especially those who were studying and who saw themselves as *educated professionals*, said that such behaviour was outdated and not in keeping with the *modern type gay*. Everyday clothing, according to these *gays*, ought to be *casual, simple, unisex* style (see Chapter 9 below for detailed discussion of style), with only light make up, such as lipstick and eyeliner, whilst wearing dresses should be saved for *occasions*, such as parties or beauty contests, to be done properly with style so that they would be truly appreciated and not jeered at by children in the market.

As I noted in the first chapter, education is an integral part of the image of beauty created and purveyed by *gays* in the beauty contests. Thus, the discourse and rivalry surrounding professional education and clothing styles should not be seen as negating the creation of beauty in the beauty parlours. Rather it should be seen as part of the process of defining, and attempting to realize, what *gays* often perceive to be a more

sophisticated image of beauty. In this respect, it is interesting that when *gays* compare their present day occupation and status with *gay* work in the past, it is not the traditional transvestite dancers and singers with whom they contrast themselves, but specifically the *bantut suruy* or provincial *gay* who lived in town but worked as maids: the former appropriated and respected as representing a refined, if antiquated, version of *gayness*, for which *gays* strive, the latter representing a vulgar version of *gayness*, from which most *gays* attempted to distance themselves.

Indeed, the distinctions *gays* sought to make amongst themselves in certain respects parallels Peacock's (1968) description and analysis of transvestite performers in the *ludruk* theatres in Java during the early 1960's. The key transvestite performer was a singer who combined the refined (*alus*) imagery belonging to older traditional forms (*kuna*) with the verbal symbolism of progress and modernity (*madju*). However, these transvestites were in turn contrasted to the vulgar (*kasar*) transvestite figures who also appeared on stage. These juxtapositions and transpositions of the refined and vulgar, the traditional and the modern, were, Peacock (68:217-256) argued, central to the wider negotiation of class, status, cultural and political transformation portrayed and mediated within the context of *ludruk* performances, just as, I shall also argue, they are in *gay* beauty contests in the Philippines (cf. Chapter 10). However, it is important to locate these juxtapositions and transformations of the beautiful and the vulgar, the provincial and the modern, not just in the way in which the *gay/bantut* have been valorized in popular imaginings but also in terms of the intentionalities and social trajectories of *gay*-transvestites themselves, a perspective which is largely glossed over in Peacock's psychologistic explanation of transvestism.

Against such reductionist explanations, what I have been, and will be, arguing in this thesis, is that the engenderment of the *bantut* as an ambiguous neither/nor category - as at once beautiful and vulgar (8.5 below) - is primarily about defining and mediating social boundaries and identities; ethnic, religious, gendered and class. The point here is that in distancing themselves from the vulgar and in appropriatively creating an image of the beautiful and the refined, *gays* are not covering up, or covering over, any pathological sexuality. Rather, they are both contesting their engenderment as an excluded middle and seeking to define both for themselves and for others the quality and the nature of the transformation which they see themselves enacting.

Table 8.5 Social-Occupational Profiles of Gays in Life-history Interviews According to the Parents Social Background (see discussion below).

Total number of Gays	Lower-Middle to Middle Income			Lower Income Families.	
	Both parents were reported to be educated-professionals.	One parent was reported to be an educated-professional.	One or/both parents involved in business enterprise.	Parents occupation included everything from fisher/farmer, skilled and unskilled labour to market vendors.	
Total number of Gays	43	6 (14%)	10 (24%)	4 (9%)	23 (53%)
Gays who are presently studying for degree qualifications.	11 (26%)	3	3	0	5
Gays with degrees who are employed or seeking employment in professional occupations.	14 (33%)	3	2	2	7
Gays with degrees working in parlours.	5 (12%)	0	2	0	3
Gays with degrees working in other non-professional occupations.	1 (2%)	0	0	1	0
Gays without degrees working in parlours.	9 (21%)	0	2	0	5
Gays without degrees working in other occupations.	3 (7%)	0	0	1	3
Gays in all occupations who have had some college education.	34 (79%)	6	8	3	17

One part of the transformation relates to their social background and status, a point which Whitehead (1981) has similarly made in her analysis of the Native American berdache. This is explicit in *gay* discourse on beauty and education, but also appears to be borne out by the socio-biographical data provided by *gays* in the life-history interviews (Table 8.5, see also Table 6.1 above). Although *gays* are by no means absent from higher status or middle class households, just over 60% percent (27 of the 43 for whom I had data) of *gays* with whom I conducted life history interviews, were from homes where **neither** parent were employed in a professional occupations - that is occupations associated with some college education (or equivalent) and a "middle class" income (see appendix for more details on income, class and status), most of these (23 or 53%) from lower income households. By contrast, whilst *gays* from educated-professional and middle class backgrounds generally maintained their parents educational/occupational level, of the 23 *gays* from lower income and non-educated-professional backgrounds, 17 (74%) had completed some college education, of which 7(30%) were degree holders either employed or presently seeking employment in professional occupations, i.e. as teachers, nurses, civil servants, 5 (21%) were presently studying for degree qualifications, 3(13%) degree holders who either owned or worked in beauty parlours and 2(9%) who had quit college and were working as a beautician and in the jewellery business respectively. All together, 79% (34) of the *gays* with whom I conducted life-history interviews had received some college education.

Whilst the data from the life-history interviews does not meet strict statistical criteria of sampling, etc., it is, I think, illustrative of general trends in terms of the *gay*-transvestite persons with whom I am concerned in this thesis.⁴ Whether looked at in terms of *gay* discourse or from the perspective of where most *gays* are coming from in terms of family background - and in contrast to relative numbers of men and women who have some college education, which is approximately 30% in the town of Jolo - it is clear that social mobility is an important aspect of being *gay*. To put it another way, for *gays*, status transformation is but one part of the larger project of gender transformation, and beauty parlours have been and continue to be an important focal point both for articulating and working towards its realization.

8.4 Beauty and Empowerment: The Interactional Space of Beauty Parlours.

There is a definite quality to small town beauty parlours in the Philippines, and Jolo is no exception in this regard. Parlour names such as *Jo Jo's House of Elegance*, *The World on the Street is Rheas for Men and Women*, *Pias Hair 2000* and beauticians with names like Stella, Divine, Abba, Pinky, and Jennifer Jones give some indication of the ambience which *gay* beauticians attempt to create. Indeed, the beauty parlour is neither simply a means of livelihood for *gays* nor simply a launching point for other *gay* projects, but rather a central stage in which they perform and the domain within which on an everyday basis they experience the most empowerment.

While each beauty parlour has its own particular quality, they are for the most part laid out and decorated in a similar manner. Parlours are organized around various types of work spaces. These consist either of a single heavy table built into or pushed up against the wall fronting a large mirror or individual vanities made of rattan, most of which come from Zamboanga the local centre of rattan furniture production. In most of the parlours simple upright wooden chairs are arranged in front of the work spaces, whilst additional chairs, benches or, in a few cases, upholstered vinyl settees are placed around and along sections of the wall not occupied by work tables or vanities.

The walls themselves are decorated with a variety of different kinds of posters and wall hangings. Predominate among these are hair style posters. Produced in Thailand and featuring Chinese-Thai models, most of the hairstyles date back to the 1970's, although those beauticians who can afford to make periodic trips to Manila have more up to date hair posters in their parlours displaying the latest trends in hair styling. Mounted posters of *artista* (film and music personalities), including both local (Manila based) and foreign stars, such as Janice de Belen, Phoebe Gates, Marilyn Monroe and Michael Jackson, calender/ advertisements for shampoo, soap, coke or beer featuring local *artista*, and pin-ups taken from locally produced magazines, featuring local models and *artista* in swimsuit or underwear are also frequently displayed in the parlours. These are usually complimented by snapshots of special *gay occasions* or parties, featuring *gays* dressed up in *formal* attire, in

addition to snapshots, collages, laminates or plaques from *gay* and or/other women's beauty contests and talent shows which *gays* have either participated in, done make up for or sponsored in someway. The latter are sometimes hung on the wall, but may also be placed around and in the vanities or on the work tables.

The arrangement is such that a distinct visual and spatial division is created between the edges of the room which are filled up with furnishings and decorations, waiting customers and the usually more numerous younger men hanging out (*nagistandby*) and the centre of the parlour which is apart from the simple wooden chairs left largely open for the *gay* beauticians who do not so much fill as they use the central space as a stage within which to perform. This spatialization is not only created by the layout and furnishing of the room but is also at times enforced by the *gays*. Thus, whilst young men in particular will often walk across what is the beauticians area to use the mirror, they do not linger there for long as they face being told off by the *gays*, and for the most part it is respected both by customers and *istandby's* alike.⁵

The significance of this spatial arrangement, can best be appreciated when contrasted with the three men's barbershops in town, which unlike the parlours, are gender exclusive. The walls of the barbershops are fairly non-descript, with little apparent interest given to the decoration of the walls. In one of the barbershops, the few posters that were displayed interestingly included a picture of handguns and a white woman (*milikan*, American) with bare breasts riding on a bicycle, although in a barbershop which had recently been redecorated there were other posters, including some *artista*. Unlike the parlours, however, barbershops are not choc-a-bloc full of printed decoration, and all the activity both visual and otherwise is concentrated in the centre of the room, which is filled up by and organized around the large traditional style reclining chairs.

Barbershops do not have extra seating space along the walls for waiting customers or *istandbys*. Waiting customers will either sit in an unoccupied barbers chair or loiter around the barbershop. Thus there is not the same spatial separation between

customer and barber as there is between beautician and customer, and the barbershop are perhaps in many respects most like the space of the coffee shops. Certainly barbershops are much more laid back than a busy coffee shop during the early morning or late afternoon period, but as with coffee shops they are chatty places, with men engaged in conversations with and sometimes milling around the barbers cutting hair.

In the parlour, however, unlike the coffee or barber shop where what one hears is the general din of conversation, it is the *gay* beauticians who one hears straight away upon entering the parlours. This is not to say that other persons do not talk inside the parlour, but rather that such conversation is by comparison to the continual chatter of the *gays* subdued and peripheral, facilitating amongst other things more private exchanges between *gays* and men who are seated. The main point is that *gay* beauticians emerge not only as the most vocal but as the dominant players and focal point of the parlours.

I stress the performative nature of *gay* work in the parlour for several reasons. First, although *gay*'s body movements and speech are in general extremely stylized, this is particularly the case in the beauty parlours where even the simplest of actions, such as picking up a pair of scissors, potentially becomes a performative event of its own, and it is in the beauty parlours more so than in beauty contests that the term camp is probably most applicable: a sensibility similarly captured in the local term *maarte*, a multi-valent term which is, in this context, best described rather than defined. *Gays* are continually posturing in front of the mirror, "*checking on my beauty*" as they often put it, combing and recombining their hair, applying and reapplying make up, and in general examining their body from various perspectives whilst making alternately disparaging or adulating comments both to themselves and to each other. All of this is done with great exuberance and dramatic flair, the following typical of *gay* verbal exchanges in the parlours:

Standing in front of the mirror, Divine turns to the side and runs her hands over her hips saying in a pouting voice, "*Nalawa' inshape ku.*" "My figure is gone."

From across the parlour Dannica replies in an encouraging voice, "*Bongga ba kaw dang.*" "Your still beautiful, dear."

At which point Cindy interrupts and says even more loudly, "*Miss Body Beautiful*".

A boy walks into the parlour, and the subject suddenly changes, *Yari na in B.Y. mu Dannica.* "Here is your handsome boy (B.Y.), Dannica."

To which Dannica replies with a look of disinterested disgust. *Sipais!* (Never!)

"*Bakit sister, mayer siya?*" Why sister, is he too small?

Eh! Bantut!, Dannica Retorts.

The performative element of *gay* work is also something which *gays* emphasize both in relation to their customers and in relation to the *boys*. As they frequently told me, one of their greatest assets was knowing how to *treat* customers. One *gay* beautician went so far as to tell me, "It is not that *bantuts* are more talented than women at hair styling or make up, but that they know how to win customers through *PR*, public relations style." *PR* basically translates into the way in which *gays* fawn over and flatter even the most unattractive person, stroking their hair and saying things like, "*Ay! Malingkat kaw inda'.*" "Your so beautiful,love." Even whilst with their back turned to them or when the customer is out of earshot they may make a face or comment to other *gays* in local *swardspeak* (*gay* argot), "*Ikang!*" "Ugly!"

The same holds true with *gay*'s approach to the young men who frequent the parlours and largely parallels what *gays* told me about knowing how to *treat* their boyfriends. Although this was most often said in reference to *gay*'s reputed *all around* ability in sexual foreplay, *PR* was recognized and used by *gays* to initiate relationships with *boys* with whom they were interested in the parlours. This usually meant complimenting their good looks or asking about and complimenting their clothes: "*Krush ku dayang in handsome mu. Ha'in bini mu in levi's?*" "I am in love with your handsomeness. Where did you buy your jeans?" (See also Whitam 1993 on *gays* chatting up boys in Cebu).

Customers and istandbys also stressed the performative or *entertainment* value of *gays* in the beauty parlours, sometimes comparing it with *gay* beauty contests. Some

women, for instance, told me that one of the reasons they went to the *bantut* beautician was that, as they put it, "*maingat sila magbissara*" "They knew how to talk." On the one hand, they said they enjoyed the attention and flattery of the *gays*, although, of course, they realized *gay PR*, public relations, was just an act. On the other hand, they said they also enjoyed listening to the chatter of *gay* beauticians, which was risque and often bordered on the vulgar, women and men sometimes engaging the *gays* in comic banter, although by comparison with audience participation in beauty contests and young men's joking comments to *gays* outside the parlour, they were more subdued spectators.

There is usually very little consultation by *gay* beauticians with their customers with respect to style of cut or make up, nor on the other hand do customers often express any kind of opinion about the hair cut or make up. In most instances apart from indicating the general nature of the service required, it is a case of simply placing oneself in the hands of the beautician who with few exceptions were relatively free to cut, style or apply make up in any way they please, and in my experience there are not many occasions where customers clearly expressed their displeasure with the service or style of haircut which they had received. Rather, customers almost completely defer to the *gay* beautician, as being best able to evaluate, create and make them beautiful. In this respect, *gay* beauticians are like other ritual specialists, to whom persons submit during consultation and whose possession of special knowledge and ability is, as Atkinson (1990) has recently argued with respect to ritual specialists/shamans amongst the Wana of Sulawesi, indexed in, as it is in part constituted by, their client-audience, and to a lesser extent, their economic success.

Gays, in fact, often suggested that their performances were ultimately aimed at earning money. As Jo-Jo told me,

Having a parlour is a good business. If you know how "to deal, to treat, to please customer". You have to please. Ok, you have a mistake, but you have to think you are going to make money off of them, *hikasin mu sila*. Customer. If not from them, we wouldn't be able to get any money, we wouldn't be able to eat. Like I was telling my companions in the parlour, its from them that we get our food. So, if you work, "heartily, do it, so that they will be satisfied." If they are "satisfied" with your work, they will be

"satisfied" paying you, however much you want them to pay.

Although ultimately as Jo-Jo puts it, beauticians are dependent upon their customers for their livelihood, it is not without significance that he also used the phrase, "*hikasin mu sila*," "make money off of them." This is the same phrase young men use in terms of their trickster relationship with the *gays*, and in this context seemingly highlights *gay*'s mercenary intent towards their customers. However, there is another aspect to this. Just as *gays* are unable to realize *remembrancing* relations with young men, who view them simply as a means of obtaining material advantage and sexual gratification, so too, *gays* working in the parlours are largely circumscribed within the domain of commoditized relations.

This, in itself, is not surprising given the fact that beauty parlours are business establishments, the transactions in the parlour, like the transactions in any other *business* (referring to any form of buying or selling) defined primarily in terms of commodity exchange (*utang*), and I am not suggesting that the *gay/bantut* beauticians are the only persons or businesses who are, as it were, circumscribed within the sphere of commodity relations. However, often mediating such business transactions are other kinds of relationships expressed, if not always fully realized, in terms of encompassing remembrances. Perhaps the best example, and one widely cited in the literature, is the informally institutionalized *suki* relationship between regular trading partners and/or merchants and customers, characterized by the development of "fictive" kinship/sibling bonds through the instantiation of gifting relations (cf. Stark 1992). The point here is that although some persons (usually it was women who expressed a preference) had their favourite *gay* beauticians whom they would patronize (whom *gays* referred to as regulars), there was seldom any suggestion, either by the *gays* or by the customers that I talked to, that these relationships ever amounted to anything other than, at the most, casual acquaintances or friends.

Certainly, reciprocal gifting relationships between *gays* and their customers appeared to be rare. Only on one occasion (when a *gay* did make up for a Christian funeral on the corpse of a deceased Christian Filipino) did I ever here a *gay* refer to the

money he/she had received as *sarakka* (charitable alms, sometimes used synonymously with remembrances). Most important of all is that *gays* often said that whilst customers paid for their services, they did not accept or treat them as persons.

Gay is a person, your just a woman. They love people, but people don't love *gay*. They only love because they want the service, like cutting of the hair. For sure, they want handsome or more beauty. Because of the *gays*. So they need it, but they also pay for it. But deep inside, "Useless!" "*Gay, ah na! Makaulung-ulung kamu.*" "You are pitiful". Like this. Like that. That's what we hear them saying.

The assertion of a common or shared humanity was a recurring theme, moreover, both in *gay* life-histories and in discussions with *gays* in the beauty parlours: "I am just a persons with feelings". "Are we not persons (*tau*).". "We are just the same, persons." As the data from the survey-questionnaire's which I present below bears out, whilst the *gay/bantut* are collectively endowed and empowered as masters of style and beauty and masters of appropriative imitation (*singuran*), the transformative power of the *gays* is also regarded as potentially dangerous and polluting. Thus, I argue, there is continual attempt made by persons to contain them and their potency. This is accomplished not only through their circumscription within the domain of illicit and unproductive sexuality but also through their exclusion from gifting transactions (*remembrances*) and enclosure within the sphere of commodified relations.

8.5 Beauty and Vulgarity: The aesthetic circumscription of *gays*.

Beauty parlours are commonly divided into the "port area" parlours and the "downtown" parlours (see Table 8.1 above): the former by virtue of their proximity to several 'beer' and prostitution houses (with which the port area parlours are also sometimes associated) and the general rundown condition of the parlours and general environs around them seen as being the least respectable, whilst the latter by virtue of their location in the town centre, the most respectable. Thus, for Jo-Jo (Jo-Jo's House of Elegance) whose first parlour was in the "port area" owning a parlour in town was an important part of his overall project to achieve respectability as a *gay* person. Describing his original dream of a downtown parlour, Jo-Jo told me,

It was late, maybe 1980, when I had my own parlour. It was all my vision. I told my friends, I'm leaving you, just because I want to live, I want to be a success. I left them, my friends, my work, my parlour- it was difficult. You see because my parlour was in the port area before, and then I transferred into town. So I had a dream back then when I was still in the port area. I told my customers, someday, I said to them, "there will be a time", when you see my name in town, Jo-Jo Elegance (see Figure 8.1).

Gay beauticians who work in the port area strongly deny any association with prostitution, and told me that they did not want to invest money in building new parlours since they might be destroyed by the feuding which periodically erupts in the town. Moreover, whilst, the "port area" parlours, which consists of six parlours, are usually considered the seediest, in-town or downtown parlours and the beauticians that work in and hang out in them are no less the object of speculative gossip.

Pias Hair 2000 and the A&M Cartimar, two "in town" parlours are located fronting a main embarking point for the Jeepney (public transportation) near the Plaza Tulay and next door to one of the larger cinemas, and are thus a popular "istandby" place for men, who loiter around the plaza and theatre, gossiping, smoking, discussing religion, meeting friends and conducting "business". It is generally a very noisy, raucous place, with men usually constantly hanging around outside the parlours, occasionally wandering in and out of the parlour, and exchanging in ostensibly good natured banter with the *gays*. It was usually outside of the parlour, however, that men's remarks tended to be not just louder but also raunchier and many at first often involved some comment- usually quite graphic- suggesting my relationships with the *gays* in the parlours, such as, "Americans have big ones so you better be careful or you might rupture your anus". These parlours are also located beneath the Maharaja hotel, commonly associated with female prostitution. In addition, since it is one of two hotels where the few foreigners who pass through town sometimes stay, it is associated with liaisons between *gays* and foreigners.

Around the corner from these parlours is Jennifers House of Unisex. One of a handful of *gays* who worked in a beauty parlour prior to the 1974 war, Jennifer after whom the parlour is named, is perhaps the most widely known *gay* in the community,

and a large percentage of the beauticians working in Jolo, have at one time or another worked for her. Certainly she is one of the most talked or gossiped about. Jennifer is commonly considered to be the wealthiest amongst the *gay*-beauticians, owning her own house and, significantly in a town with few private automobiles, driving to work in her own car. There is a good deal of gossip surrounding her rise to wealth, one story, amongst others, being that during the seige and burning of Jolo in 1974 she looted several pawnshops. Other gossip centres not around her wealth but her sexuality, although it is interesting to note the connection between ill-gotten wealth and illicit sexuality. Some persons suggested she was really a *silahis* or "double blade", while others suggested she was a hermaphrodite. The gossip increased, moreover, after an incident in which Jennifer was assaulted by a youth who claimed that she had attempted to rape him and bite his penis. Seemingly everyone knows of her upstairs room and associates it with the homosexual practises of the *gays* who work in the parlours.⁵

The point is that whether located in the "port area" or "in town", beauty parlours, like the *gays* themselves are regarded ambivalently, both as a locus of beauty and as a locus of the vulgar and indecent: an ambivalence which strikingly emerged in the response people gave to questions about *bantuts*, *bantut* beauticians and beauty parlours. In a questionnaire-survey of 244 individuals on various items of personal consumption, respondents were asked a series of questions about where they got their hair cut, how often they had it cut, how much they spent and why they got their hair cut there. They were also asked why they thought their was more *bantut* than either men or women working in beauty parlours, what they though about the *bantut*, why they thought the numbers of *bantut* had increased and if they ever felt or acted hostile towards the *bantut*.

As seen in Table 8.6 below, the majority of women (just under 80%) said that they got their hair cut by the *bantut* either in the beauty parlour (75%) or through home service (4%). This is hardly surprising given the fact that as one woman put it, "There is no other choice for women." However, it is indicative of the extent to which over the last twenty years, hair care has moved out of the home- (reflected in

the "other" category in Table 8.5) and into the parlours. Whereas previously other women usually within the family were primarily responsible for grooming, now not to have one's hair done is considered extremely low class.

Table 8.6 Where Women say they get their hair cut.

	Parlour	Home Service	Other Women	N=
Single Women	33	3	10	46
Married Women	51	2	13	66
All Women	84 (75%)	5 (4%)	23 (21%)	112

The most surprising result in terms of the survey was that, as Table 8.7 (over) shows, out of 109 men interviewed, only 24 (or approximately 22%) said they had their hair cut at the parlour, with the overwhelming majority (74%) reporting that they had their hair cut at the barber. *Gays* who worked in the parlours estimated that they had an equal number of men as women clients, and although I never kept any strict tabulations of men and women actually having their hair cut, my own observations correlated well with what they reported. Certainly, there were always more men *nagistandby* - that is hanging around in the parlours since women would usually not sit around in the parlours once they had their hair cut, so that my impressions may be skewed by the this. However, I think there may be another explanation for this discrepancy between the observational and survey data.

Table 8.7 Where men say they get their hair cut.

	Barber	Parlour	Other	N=
Single	29	13	1	43
Parlours	52	11	3	66
All Men	81 (74%)	24 (22%)	4	109

As might be expected there is some correlation with age and marital status both amongst men and women. The overall age mean of men who said they went to the parlour was 26 (range 17-55, median 24) whilst the overall age mean for men who said they went to the barber was 34 (range 16-82, median 30), while there is an even more marked divergence in the proportion of single (30%) as compared to married men (17%) who said they went to the parlour, which fits with both my own observations and with what the *gays* reported. Similarly, the age mean of women who said they went to the parlours was 26 (range 16-50; median 25) whilst the age mean of women who said they had their hair cut by other women was 32 (range 17-63 median 30), although proportionally a slightly higher percentage of married (77%) than single (71%) women said they went to the *bantut* beautician.

There is also some correlation with educational attainment, with 67% of women and 75% of men respondents who said they went to the parlours reporting some college education as compared to only 43% of women and 56% of men reporting some college education amongst those respondents who said they went elsewhere. This differential is even greater amongst married women, with 60% of respondents who said they went to the parlours reporting some college level education as compared to only 23% reporting some college education amongst those who said they did not have *bantut* beauticians do their hair. Moreover, of the thirteen married women who said they had their hair done by other women, a majority (70%) were either market or sari-sari store vendors and thus obviously at the lower end of the socio-occupational scale.

Whilst I am hesitant to draw too much significance from this, there is, as I have already noted with respect to the *gays*, a strong correlation between the discourse of education and style, so that men and women who regard themselves as educated maybe more likely to celebrate the *bantut* as purveyors of beauty. However, in attempting to understand the apparent discrepancy between what men reported about beauty parlours in the survey and what in practise appears to be the case, it is useful to look at the responses given by women and men as to why they went to the parlours

as opposed to the answers given by men as to why they had their hair cut at the barber.

Table 8.8 Women’s response to why they went to parlour.

Know how/ability of <i>bantut</i>	19
<i>Beauty, creative, istyle, fashionable</i>	10
Good hair cut	10
Neat	2
Know how to make it fit	2
Where women go	2
Regular customer	2

Table. 8.9 Men’s response to why they had haircut at parlour.

<i>Beauty, istyle, arte</i>	9
Know how	4
Quick	2
Clean	2

Table 8.10 Response to why men went to barber.

<i>Neat; clean; neat & clean; clean cut.</i>	20
Know-how/ability	12
Good (marayaw)	9
What I’m used to	4
Quick	3
I like it there, feel "comfortable"	3
No desire for, don’t like <i>bantut</i>	2
Best for men	2

As seen in Tables 8.8 - 8.10, both the barber and the *bantut* beautician are respectively seen as having the appropriate know-how and ability. But whereas the adjectives used to describe the *bantut* are *beauty*, *istyle*, *creativity*, and *fashionable*, the adjectives used to describe the barber are, apart from those responses which explicitly suggested that the barber is best for men and that there is no desire for the *bantut*, *neat* and the *neat* and the *clean cut*, respondents alternately using both the English word *clean* and the Tausug word *malanu* (clean).

What is signified by the *neat* and the *clean*, however, is not simply a style of haircut, and one is immediately alerted to the larger symbolic implications of notions of cleanliness (cf. Mary Douglas 1966). As I have noted, a generally held view of beauty parlours is as pick up places, sometimes of prostitutes for men, but more usually of boys for the *gays*. This comes out especially in discussions with older men, many if not the majority of whom, speak of beauty parlours as simply places where young men hang out so as to have cigarettes, beer or money given to them in exchange for "allowing" themselves to be masturbated etc. While this commonly recognized *kursinada* scenario is as I have previously argued a part of the discourse of masculinity, at the same time to be constantly hanging around with the *bantut* in the parlours is seen not just as vulgar, but also as potentially polluting and dangerous in as much as there is a potential that one will be *nalamin*, that is, come under the influence of and become a *bantut*.

This was brought home to me on one occasion when I invited a friend (a middle-aged married man), whose jeep and driver I had hired, to a picnic at the beach with some *gay* friends. Assured that there would be food at the picnic he agreed to accompany us. At the beauty parlour where we had agreed to meet, I invited him in to wait for the others. While at first he came in to the parlour, it became apparent that he was quite uncomfortable, and he seemed to grow increasingly impatient with my *gay* friends. When finally we left for the beach, he asked what kind of food we had brought for our party. The *gays* replied that whilst they had planned on buying roasted fish in the market, in the end they had only brought *kilawin*- raw fish prepared with vinegar, green mangoes, green papaya and peppers, which is often

eaten as an accompaniment to beer and alcohol, although it was not on that occasion. My friend immediately decided that he would not go with me to the picnic since, as he later told me, he would not eat uncooked food which had been touched by the *bantuts* fingers. "*Makalumi*'!" "It is polluting!" he said, as he made a face of extreme disgust.

Similarly I would argue, in terms of beauty parlours and barbershops, in selecting the barber, respondents were not only associating themselves with what is, as I noted earlier, an exclusively male space, but also, distancing themselves from what is conventionally regarded to be the polluted and potentially polluting domain of the parlours. Indeed, while the feeling of defilement is most clearly articulated by older men, this is a much more widespread association both amongst men and women, which shows up clearly in the responses given by them to the questions, "What are your comments about the *bantut*?" and "Why are there more *bantut* than men or women working in the parlours?"

The answers (see Tables 8.11 - 8.14 below) tend to coalesce around two contrasting sets of ideas. On the one hand, like the responses given by men and women above as to why they went to the parlours, comments centre around the *bantut* being talented and creative purveyors of *beauty*, *istyle* and *maarte*. On the other hand, there is a whole set of responses centred around their vulgarity, their homosexuality and their voracious sexuality, evoking comments about such practises being against religion, making the land dirty, being hells kindling, etc. Significantly, moreover, there are no strict correlations between these diverging responses and age, gender, marital, educational or occupational status.

It is here that the nexus between *gay* sexuality, their ambiguous engenderment and their role as purveyors of beauty begins to emerge. On the one hand, the *bantut* are like women, but even more so when it comes to *beauty*, *maarte* and *istyle*, and on the other hand, they are like women, but even more so, in their desire for men and in their sexual appetites. Thus, as one man put it, although what he said was clearly reflected in what other men and women told me,

Everyone knows that the *bantut* are vulgar, but when there is a special occasion, when their daughter is to be married, who do they get to do their hair. The *bantut*, because they have the ability/know how to make beauty. If they didn't, then people would talk bad about the parents and say that they did not really care for their daughter.

In the final chapter of the thesis I shall attempt to outline the historical context within which this valorisation of the gay/*bantut* has occurred. I shall also return to and explore the transpositions of beauty and vulgarity which occur in transvestite gay beauty contests, and through which gays are continually being reconstituted as the embodiments of liminal sexuality and gender. In the next chapter, however, I survey the wider context of *beauty*, *istyle* and *maarte* as articulated in a variety of consumption domains, and as nodal points both in the negotiation of hierarchy and in the negotiation of femininity.

Table 8.11. Summary of men’s most frequent response when asked why *bantut* and not men or women worked in the beauty parlours.

It their business, occupation, work.	22
They run after <i>trends</i> ; know how to make <i>istyle, arte</i> , western imitation.	10
Their know how/ability (<i>ingat</i>)	8
What they have studied, learned, grown accustomed to doing	8
Its their <i>skill, talent, line</i> .	5
No other work for them, for uneducated <i>bantut</i>	5
Work suited for women, fits them.	4
They are very diligent.	3
Better than women.	2

Table 8.12. Summary of women’s most frequent response to why *bantut* and not men or women worked in the parlours.

Its their job, occupation, work.	20
They follow trends; know how to <i>istyle, arte</i> .	8
Its what they have practised, learned, studied.	8
It their <i>line, talent, skill</i> .	8
They do it better than men or women.	6
Know how/ability (<i>maingat</i>)	3
Work that suits them.	2
Cut hair to make it fit person	2

Table 8.13. Summary of women's response to question what can you tell me about the *bantut*?

Like women in style, <i>arte</i> , desire for men.	14
<i>Istyle, maarte</i>	12
More than women in <i>arte</i> , desire for men.	9
Vulgar, sex with men, excessive sexual appetite	9
Desires sex with men	6
Against religion, belong in hell	6
Diligent, hard working	5
Cut hair beautiful, beautiful, work hard at beauty	5
Good	4
Different	4

Table 8.14. Men's response to, "what can you tell me about the *bantut*".

Desire men, having sex with men	19
Like women in <i>arte</i> , heart, desire men.	15
Talented, creative, beauty, <i>istyle, maarte</i> .	10
Vulgar, having sex with men makes land dirty, disgusting, throw up.	9
Acting like women, pretending, want to be women	7
Against religion, hell's kindling, flowers of hell	6
Different, crazy, stupid	6
More than women	3

Endnotes

1. Although certainly not as formally institutionalized, there are many parallels to be drawn here with the *guru-chela*, teacher-disciple, relationship described by Nanda (1990:43) amongst the South Asian *hijra* in which new recruits enter one of seven *hijra* "houses" through the sponsorship of a *guru* to whom they pay a fine or fee.
2. One case which happened early on in my field work in Jolo involved a *gay* who had been working for Rhea (The world on the Street is Rhea's) and who reportedly died of a overdose of some kind of medicine. What was emphasized by Rhea in telling me this story was the pity and compassion she felt towards the *gays* working in her parlour, just as if they were "family". A definite subtext in the event, however, was that Rhea was to a large extent at least indirectly considered responsible for the death since the *gay* was working in her parlour, and as it were in her "house" and under- *halawman*- her protection-Rhea was thus obligated to finance the death celebration, although it was held at the *gay*'s parents home.
3. Unlike Butler's (1993:241) suggestion about gay and transsexual "houses" in Harlem portrayed in the film *Paris is Burning* (Livingstone 1991), I do not think that beauty parlours actually function as a site for reformulating kinship and community relations, although they do expose the kinds of social fictions and political encounters which characterize 'normal' family relations.
4. The data is strictly speaking representative only in terms of the *gays* with whom I conducted life-history interviews, although I tried to include a range of *gays* - in terms of age and occupation - in my interviews. As I have noted previously, it is difficult to define the population of *gay/bantut* persons in part because not everyone who may be called a *bantut* or a *bantut-bantut* would call themselves *gay*. Thus, if the data is skewed towards educated *gays*, I would suggest this is because education represents an important defining characteristic for persons who call themselves *gay*. It would have been useful, however, to have had detailed data on *gay*'s siblings to see to what extent they mirror or not *gays* educational and occupational achievements. Impressionistically speaking, I would say that probably a much lower percentage of them especially from lower income/status households have gone on to college education.
5. On one occasion I was waiting to meet Rhoda, the owner of Rhoda's parlour, for an appointment. The parlour was empty except for Rhoda's three young *gay* employees, four or five young men, and several other young *gays* all of whom were just hanging around, "nagistandby". A large stereo-karaoke unit was playing loudly, the younger *gays* were applying make up and grooming each other in front of the mirror. The young boys who initially were seated along the back of the parlour increasingly became unruly and began exchanging blows on the shoulder (a fairly common practise although more usually among pre and early teenage boys who play a variety of pain inflicting/ endurance kind of games), a picture which reminded me of something out of American Junior High-High School, e.g. a group of young

teenage girls/guys hanging around at any variety of places teasing/flirting etc., except that of course there were no girls only *gays* and boys. It soon became clear, however, that the boys were invading what the *gays* regarded to be their space, as they were now walking around the parlour, picking up hair brushes and powder and generally getting louder and louder. When Rhoda finally showed up, she yelled at the boys, walked over to one of the drawers and pulled out a wooden stick and with a threatening glare told the boys she knew how to use it if it came to it.

6. Several of the parlours do let onto a back room, where *gays* can rest during the day or "entertain" visitors. This may either be just a make shift partition from the parlour with just a curtain separating it from the rest of the parlour or it may actually be a separate room with a private door. In some of these back rooms, wall decorations are of a more explicitly sexual theme, although it is usually posters featuring light skinned women posing nude, not hard core pornography or homoerotic material. Jennifer has a bed sit type arrangement which is on the first floor above her parlour, fitted with refrigerator and small stove, in addition to a small bed and toilet, which looks out on to the plaza.

According to the Jennifer a young man had attempted to mug her whilst she was closing up the parlour, and when she tried to defend herself, he struck her on the nose with a hammer. According to the other *gays* in town, however, the person that beat Jennifer was a regular "kurcinada" but that he had demanded payment after Jess had masturbated him. When Jennifer refused, the "kurcinada" took a hammer and beat her. Most people said that the boy was actually one of Jennifer's *ipatan*, to whom Jennifer regularly gave money, clothing, etc. in hopes that he could "*maghinang mangi*"- do bad things with him. On this occasion Jennifer is said to have tried to rape the boy and even bit his penis, and the boy in self defense was forced to beat off Jess.



Figure 8.1 "Someday, there will be a time, when you see my name in town, *Jo-Jo Elegance*."



Figure 8.2 and 8.3 Shots from Eva's beauty parlour. Note all the decorations on the wall.





Figure 8.4 Inside Rhea's beauty parlour (photo produced from video).

Chapter 9: Beauty and the Politics of Istyle.

9.1 Introduction.

In this chapter I consider the wider context of beauty and *istyle* (style) in terms of a variety of material culture domains and consumption practises. First, following Bourdieu (1984) I consider *istyle*, as a central organizing principle of taste sensibilities which both reflect, and are constitutive of, local status distinctions, particularly those between more affluent educated-professionals and poorer, undereducated persons. I then attempt to fracture this picture and locate it in terms of the local understandings, and negotiations of, hierarchy. This is played out, amongst other places, in the presentations (prestations), and reciprocal evaluations of the self in everyday life, which is alternately articulated in terms of the *simple* and *maarte*. In the final part of the chapter I consider the implications of this everyday politics of *istyle* for women, who must continually negotiate a position between that as keepers and producers of local tradition and status-honour and that as persons who seek status and prestige in their own right: a process made more complex by the way local *adat* (Muslim customs and traditions) and American *istyle*, associated amongst other things with work abroad, have been juxtaposed and increasingly valorized in terms of contrasting images of sociality and femininity.

The quantitative data in this chapter is drawn from the survey-questionnaire of consumption practises referred to previously (see Chapter 8 and Appendix C), although I have used the data mainly to support and illustrate points drawn from everyday observation and dialogue. It is important to stress, moreover, that I am only presenting a general overview of the data (both quantitative and qualitative). My primary aim is not to give a comprehensive account either of consumption or of the negotiation of femininity in Sulu, but rather to highlight central aspects of each, particularly as they relate to the general situation of the *gay/bantut*.

9.2 Istyle and the Appropriation of Otherness.

Whilst the beauty parlour is the primary stage on which *gays* perform, it is also a more general site, particularly for young men, of *nagistyle-istyle*, which might best

be translated by the American slang as styling, although by comparison with *gay/bantut* standards it is much more subdued. In what was almost a set routine, young men would enter the parlour and proceed directly to the mirror. They would comb their hair, wipe the sweat off of their forehead with a handkerchief, brush off and adjust their clothing and strike a pose in front of the mirror, after which they would sit down. A similar procedure was followed before leaving the parlour, and sometimes men would pause facing out of the doorway, hands on their hips - a posture widely recognized to be characteristic of *nagistyle-istyle* (styling) - before casually sauntering off.

Inside the parlour, meanwhile, young men greet one another with the traditional *salaam*: hands briefly clasped together and then brought to the face and chest. When they sit down, they light up, often offering their neighbour a smoke, usually *Marlboro*, or if the person is already smoking, borrowing their fag to light up. This brief interaction almost invariably leads into some kind of verbal exchange about different aspects of each other's clothing, the following a fairly typical sequence:

"Where did you buy those levis?"

"Zamboanga."

"*Original?*"

"Yah, *Original*. How about yours?"

(Laughs, somewhat embarrassedly) "There only local, 200 pesos." (Quickly interjecting) But these Raybans now, I paid 2000 pesos for them, I bought them from a friend who brought them back from Saudi. *Original*.

I would similarly be engaged in such conversations with questions raised about whether or not my jeans were *original*, that is U.S. made, where I bought my shoes and how much I paid for them, and whether or not my glasses were for *istyle* or whether they were actually prescription lenses (*tagubat*), reference made throughout to their own jeans, sunglasses, shoes, watch, where they had bought them, who had given them, whether they were *original* or not, and how much they cost. What seemed especially significant was to be able to say with reference to a pair of *levis*, for instance, "*Sibu' da kita*." "We are the same", the expectation being that I would

be wearing *Levis* and *Addidas*, that my glasses were *Raybans*, and that I smoked only *blue seal* (smuggled / imported, *U.S. made*) *Marlboro*.

There are several things which emerge from these encounters. The first is that the emphasis of *istyle* is not on individual expression. Rather the evaluation of *istyle* is based primarily on an individual's ability to embody and articulate a set of commonly expected elements or criteria. In this sense *istyle* is comparatively much closer to the normatively informed notion of fashion as opposed to the sensibility of style as outlined, for instance, by Miller (1990a:55 *passim*) with reference to Trinidad. The second is that whilst there is an expectation that Americans, such as myself, will exhibit *istyle*, it is not, for the most part at least, literally about America or Americans, but the extent to which a certain imagined quality of *America* is locally constituted and indexed in these material practises.

This is clearly seen in the notion of the *original* which to a large extent refers to the symbolic and spatial proximity to America and distance from the Philippines with which a product is associated, and which is, with a few important exceptions, one of the major criteria by which many goods, including clothing and cigarettes, are ranked. Thus, for example, locally tailored denim jeans rank lowest in terms of everyday *casual* clothing. Philippine made, factory branded jeans, such as *Freego's*, rank next in the hierarchy and above these internationally branded but Philippine made jeans, including *Levis* and *Lee*. *Original*, however, is usually reserved for internationally branded jeans which are seen to originate outside of the Philippines, and in particular America. As one person jokingly retorted when someone asked them if their jeans were *original*, "Yes, *original, original* Philippine made!" To which everyone broke out laughing at the apparent oxymoronic juxtaposition of the terms, *original* and Philippine made.

Cigarettes are similarly ranked forming three clearly demarcated price levels. At the bottom are a variety of Philippine made cigarettes, with names like *Stork*, *Plaza*, *Goldstar* and *Mark*, priced at around 6 pesos per pack. The next level includes both local and international brands but Philippine produced cigarettes, such as *Hope* and

More, priced around 10 pesos per pack. At the top and by all accounts the local market leaders (Table 9.1 below), are *Marlboro*, *Philip Morris* and *Champion*. These are further divided between locally produced *Marlboro* etc., priced at around 12 pesos per pack, and imported *Marlboro* etc., commonly designated *blue seal* cigarettes - a carry over from the seal on packs of *Union* cigarettes which flooded the local market following world war II and which are associated amongst other things with the American G.I.- which range anywhere from 12 to 15 pesos per pack. Although only 33% (24 of 78) of men who said they smoked said they bought *blue seal*, such cigarettes, along with textile and used clothing, continues to be one of the major commodities to come through the *back door* via the legal barter trading and smuggling routes from Malaysia passing into Sulu and beyond to larger cities such as Zamboanga, Davao, Cebu and Manila.

Table 9.1 Brand of cigarette as reported by those expressing a preference.¹

	Married Men N=39	Single Men N=24	Gay N=11	Women N=3
Marlboro	14	16	2	-
Champion	5	1	-	1
Philip-Morris	7	5	7	2
Hope	7	2	-	
Stork	3	-	-	
Plaza	2	-	-	
Gold Star	1	-	-	

As with the contrast drawn between locally produced and *original* clothing, which is alternately expressed in terms of greater *istyle* and *beauty* and more functional statements such as their durability, comfort and feel on one's skin, the contrast between local cigarettes and name brand/imported cigarettes is expressed in terms of being of inferior grade, "acid", "bad for the lungs" as compared to the "top quality" and "best in flavour". This does not, as in other cases (cf Miller 1988: 364) reflect any disjunction between utilitarian and symbolic valuations, but rather is part of the

overall process of appropriation whereby a certain *quality* - the term ranked second in order of importance to *istyle* in selecting clothes - of otherness is transformed and rendered an inherent part or property of the material object itself; something one can feel, taste, etc. (Bourdieu 1984 and see also Spooner 1986:226 who makes a similar point although with regards to the Western consumers constitution of, and search for, an authentic quality in traditional, non-Western goods).

Like the hierarchy of *La Sape* running from Congo to Paris outlined by Friedman (1990a), the spatial dimension of *istyle* - the question of symbolic proximity - to some extent maps onto and maps out the local political-economy. For instance, of those who say they spend an average of 500+ or 1000+ pesos on clothing per month, a considerable percentage say they buy their clothes outside of Jolo in Zamboanga, Cebu or Manila or even abroad, each place, as it were, conceptually one step nearer to the centre of *istyle*, and *original* quality (Table 9.2 below). This is played out on a more elaborate and larger scale amongst the political and economic elite who not only make frequent *business* trips to the metropole, but also sometimes possess homes in each of these places.²

Table 9.2 Where respondents said they mainly purchased clothing by estimated monthly expenditure on clothing.

	Jolo	Jolo/ Zamboanga	Zamboanga	Manila/ Cebu	Abroad	N=
1000+	53 %	-	29%	12%	6%	17
500+	73 %	13 %	8%	6%	-	79
100+	83 %	15%	2%	-	-	121
50+	100%	-	-	-	-	21

However, it is not simply a matter of economic proximity, but, for the educated middle-classes at least, a matter of being able to articulate the difference. In particular a clear pattern emerged on the questionnaire-survey in response to the question, "what do you imitate (*singuran*) in selecting your clothes?"

Table 9.3 What persons said they imitated for *istyle*, by expenditure.

	Self	Friends	Trendy/ Latest	Artista	Magazine
50+	70%	20%	10%		
100+	45%	22%	10%	8%	16%
500+	22%	19%	7%	17%	35%
1000+	18%	6%		25%	44%

As Table 9.3 above shows, the most common response by those reporting 50+ pesos per month expenditure on cloth, (expenditure on clothing strongly correlated with other aspects of "social class", cf. Appendix D for more details), was *baran ku or baran-baran sadja*, "just me, myself". This was followed by respondents who emphasized the influence of their friends or following what was currently trendy. As one moves towards 500+ and 1000+ pesos per month, there is a significant shift away from the emphasis on oneself or one's friends as the source of style and towards the media, either *artista* (film and pop stars) and magazines, including both locally produced (in Manila) magazines such as *Mod* (a weekly variety magazine with features on clothing, movie stars, love stories, etc.), and imported *women's magazines* - ranging from *Good Housekeeping* to *Cosmopolitan* - as being the source of *istyle*.

Education is a dominant factor here. When broken down according to those with only up to a High School education and those with some College education within the 50+/100+ expenditure and 500+/1000+ expenditure grouping an significant correlation emerges between lower educational qualifications and movies/artista and higher educational qualifications and magazines. Gender is also a significant factor (age less so) with a higher percentage of women than men citing magazines as being the source of *istyle*, whilst a higher percentage of men then women citing movies as being the source of *istyle*.

Although not immediately apparent, this articulates in some ways with the current contestation in Islamic understanding between those who say they follow the ways of

the *kamaas-maasan* (the ancestors or persons of old) who tend, although not exclusively, to be uneducated and relatively poor, and those who follow the *ustadz* (Islamic professors) who by contrast tend to be educated-professionals (see 3.1 above). As in the question of what one imitates for *istyle*, what is emphasized by the former is that the centre of religious knowledge and understanding lies in the self (*baran* or *baran-baran ku sadja*), as opposed to those who follow the teaching of the *ustadz*, (Islamic professors), who stress the necessity of understanding and being able to explicate the sacred text, the *Qu'ran*.

Whilst not wishing to push the comparison too far, a common point of distinction in religion, as in *istyle*, lies in the orientation towards what I have called the texture and textuality of the material. On one end of the continuum, the emphasis is more on the inherent mana-like quality or texture of the object and appropriation is primarily a question of possession. At the other end of the continuum, whilst there is no question about the quality of the objects, appropriation increasingly becomes a question of stylistic exegesis, of being able to articulate as well as situate oneself and others more abstractly in relation to variety of different textual possibilities.

This can be clearly seen in other domains of consumption. On the one hand, amongst higher income and especially educated households, home decoration is closely tied to and modeled after magazines such as *Asian Homes*, a point made, in some instances, to distance themselves from the use of *laminates* (laminated snapshot collages, see Chapter 3.2) -in decorating the *sala* (guest reception room), which was seen as unfashionable. Moreover, although 'America' is the overall term which marks out social distinction, amongst the more educated - wealthy elite, there is a self-conscious discourse which emphasizes the need to take American and/or European styles and transform them in terms of local cultural 'traditions' (cf. Wilk 1990). As I suggest in Chapter 10, this is precisely where the *gay/bantut* come as creative producers of *native modern style*.

Amongst lower income households, as might be expected, a much different sensibility emerged. On the one hand, most lower income households display calendars or

posters of homes and home interiors decorated both in the style of Asian Homes and in what was ostensibly a more European/North American style, and in discussing their idea of their dream house persons commonly drew on images of *concrete*, *bungalow* homes furnished with carpets, large upholstered furniture and pianos, with little attention given to detailed discrimination between the various stylistic possibilities which each entailed. For the poor it was not a question of taste but a question of the proximity to *original* quality afforded by one's economic position. Similarly home decoration is often expressed as simply a matter of personal preference and what the budget will allow: furnishing one's home in these situations is often simply about accumulating as much as possible in the way of modern electronic equipment and appliances (Figures 9.1 & 9.2; cf. Miller 1990b: 102 on accumulation as response to poverty).

In summary, the picture of *istyle* that emerges is, in the first instance, a hierarchy of goods and taste discriminations, reproduced along the lines of Bourdieu's twin pyramids of economic and cultural capital. However, this is neither simply the product of colonial and post-colonial economic and cultural dependency (Philibert 1989), nor is it sufficient to analyze hierarchy in Sulu in terms of the overly objectivist distinctions of class and status which grow out of the particular historical experience of Western Europe (cf. Miller 1987:149-157 for a critique of Bourdieu). As I suggested in an earlier chapter, consumption was not only an indexical sign of the spiritual blessing (*barakat*) of the Sultan and other nobles in the traditional polity, but was also, as elsewhere (cf. Friedman 1990a: 107) through a process of encompassment, a primary constituting part of their earthly power. *Istyle*, I argue, must be understood as a transformation of a sensibility and practise with much longer historical antecedents; that is, as the engagement of reciprocally constituting / constituted persons in everyday encounter and social transaction.

9.3 On The Everyday Politics of *Istyle*: *maarte* and the *simple only*.³

In the previous chapter I noted that there were two contrasting sets of discourses - beauty and vulgarity - which were seen to characterize the *bantut*. The one term that

consistently arose in remarks about the *bantut* and which seemingly captured the contradictory sensibilities which the *bantut* were seen to embody, was *maarte*. On the one hand, *maarte* is precisely about *istyle*, the trendy (*usu*), beauty and glamour. On the other hand, *maarte* grades off into the affected and pretentious as well as the vulgar (*lumu'*, *bastos*). In short, *maarte* signals the ambiguous and socially contested, and stands in opposition to the *simple*, which signals the ostensibly normative and conventional: an opposition which, I suggest below, is central to the ongoing negotiation of hierarchy. This is played out on many different levels, along various social cleavages and in a variety of material culture domains, from interpersonal relationships mediated by the exchange of cigarettes to the politics of patron-client relations, although it is most noticeable in encounters between the wealthy (*dayahan*) and those persons who classify themselves as poor (*kamiskinan*).

In the questionnaire-survey, respondents were presented with a choice of nine terms, which I had heard in discussions related to clothing, and were asked to select the one term which best described the way they chose to dress (Table 9.4). In seeming contradiction to what was elsewhere reported by respondents to be the most important aspect in purchasing clothing, namely *istyle*, the overwhelming choice by respondents was for the *simple*. Moreover, there does not appear to have been any strong correlation between the selection of *simple* and class, age or gender. The one exception to this were *gay* respondents, only one of whom selected the *simple*, the remainder choosing *modern*, *istyle*, and *original*.

Table 9.4 Respondents choice of term which best described the way they chose to dress.

	<i>Simple</i>	<i>Class</i>	<i>Original</i>	<i>Ethnic Style</i>	<i>Istyle</i>	<i>Modern</i>	<i>Profes- sional</i>	<i>Islamic</i>	<i>Maarte</i>
50+	55%	9%	23%	9%	4%	0	0	0	0
100+	64%	4%	4%	4%	3%	15%	2%	4%	0
500+	73%	0	6%	0	8%	5%	5%	3%	0
1000+	65%	0	24%	0	0	6%	6%	0	0

What is meant by the *simple*, of course, is anything but simple. At one level a fairly consistent understanding emerged around the *simple only* in terms of self-presentation, of which cleanliness (previously encountered in relation in the contrast drawn between barbershops and beauty parlours, see 8.5) is a primary consideration. One of my first interviews in Jolo took place in the home of an older *gay* man. He apologized for his home saying it was "just *simple*", showing me various small appliances he had for cooking, and explaining how he organized his living space. Throughout our time together, he frequently made mention of the fact that he always washed his own clothes, kept his room tidy, and kept his body clean and looked for boys who were, *simple but clean*.

The emphasis on cleanliness underlines the discourse of the *simple* home and the *simple* outfit and is central to the sensibilities conveyed in the notion, *Maingat magda baran*. "Knowing how to carry oneself." As a set of bodily practises, this articulates two related but distinct orders of knowledge. On the one hand, it is informed by the ritual purifications of the body proscribed and associated with *Islam* (*junub iban istinja*). On the other hand, it is informed by notions of cleanliness inculcated by American education.

A central thrust of the American program of education in Sulu was instruction on community and personal hygiene (Gowing 1983: 62-63; 194). The emphasis on health and hygiene has become a regular part of the school curriculum, especially in the elementary grades, to the extent that one of the daily procedures for students upon first entering the class room is for teachers to inspect children for cleanliness, examining their hands and fingernails, their ears and their teeth. This appears to be part of the normal routine in other parts of the Philippines as well, and our elder son (then 5) attending nursery school in Zamboanga was, much to our chagrin, subjected to this recurring inspection.

Clothing is simply an extension of the process already at work with regards to the body. With few exceptions, to go out of the house (*panaw*), for anything other than a trip to the public market, requires a bath, a clean and usually well-pressed outfit,

shoes (not flip-flops), and, for women, some gold jewellery, and for men, a watch. The point is that to be dressed simply, is to be, simply, dressed, or as one woman put it, "at least presentable".

Beyond these basic requirements, however, lies a variety of presentational styles deemed suitable for different occasions, which can be mapped along a continuum from the *rugged* to the *formal*. *Rugged istyle* is generally defined, both for men and women, as denim (*maong*) trousers (generically referred to as *Levis*), printed t-shirts, rubber shoes, boots or top-siders. Formal *istyle* is usually defined for women as *whole dress, gown, pencil-cut or checkered skirt and blouse* with leather *heeled* shoes. For men, formal style usually means long sleeve *polo shirt* with *tailored* pants (or alternately for casual but formal, *baggy* pants, *chinos* or other cotton trousers other than jeans) and leather shoes. Men in particular identified formal with being *modern, 90's style, American style* - i.e. long sleeve with tie or coat and tie. *Semi-rugged* or *semi-formal* for men refers to *polo* (button down) shirts and denim, and for women refers to *half/square* pants with blouse and leather shoes.

Neither the rugged nor the formal contrasts with the *simple* as plain is to beautiful. The *simple* is spoken about both in terms of the rugged and the formal and each includes the discourse of *istyle, beauty, and trendy*. More importantly, underlying each of these terms is the notion of the appropriateness of clothing both for the person and for the occasion, which is expressed as "*Unu hikatup kanila*" "Whatever is suitable, fitting or appropriate for a person." The *simple* thus signals the ostensibly normative aspect of *istyle*. This is opposed to *maarte* which ostensibly signals *istyle* which transcends or lies along the margins of the conventional. However, neither the *simple* nor *maarte* reflects or operates as a cultural value system regulating the play of *istyle*, but are themselves the means through which the boundaries of *istyle* are both defined and contested.

On the one hand, the *simple* is a statement of equivalence and commensurability, such as similarly signalled by the terms *magsama-sama* and *pakikisama*, that is, to go together, to share out equally, to freely participate and partake in shared meals, not

to feel dirty or threatened by, and not to challenge either in direct confrontation or through the overt stylistic posturing indicated by *maarte*.⁴ However, the *simple* is also an assertion of one's exemplary embodiment of a symbolic order, and it is precisely those, to use Bourdieu's (1984) terms, with the most cultural capital (which in this case correlates most strongly with educational attainment) who are best able to discriminate between the various stylistic possibilities (such as *pencil-cut* or *balloon skirts*) along the continuum from the rugged to the formal in terms of the appropriateness of each for particular occasions. Persons who are unable to articulate these differences or who transgress the criteria of the presentable, are often referred to, by those who claim such knowledge, as uneducated or ignorant. Thus, being *simple* is as much about exclusivity and distinction as it is about equivalence and commensurability.

On the other hand, *maarte*, which unlike *simple* is most often used in reference to someone else's style, is one way in which persons, such as the *gay/bantut*, are negatively circumscribed outside the boundaries of the conventional. However, *maarte* may also be used - as against the *simple* - not just to signal hierarchical practises and discourse, but more importantly exclusionary practises and discourse. The point is that the evaluation of *istyle* is not simply about defining social conventions, but about defining social relations. In particular, as used by the educated 'middle class', the *simple* represents a denial of hierarchy (in the Dumontian 1970 sense of reciprocally constituted persons) and an attempt to fix mutually exclusive status categories based on criteria of taste discriminations, whilst *maarte* is a more general assertion both of the necessity of, and potential for, mutually constituting reciprocal relations.

What is intended by *maarte* is highlighted in the following two examples. As noted earlier, it was usually expected that I would smoke *blue seal* (imported/smuggled, US, made cigarettes), a clear disappointment was registered when it was discovered that I smoked the cheapest of the locally produced cigarettes. In fact, I frequently switched from brand to brand eliciting interesting and varied responses. On the one hand, when I smoked cheaper brands of cigarettes, the response to me by young men

(who nearly always smoked *Marlboro*) was not simply one of surprise, since clearly I had enough money to buy the more expensive cigarettes, just as I had enough money to buy *original* jeans and to pay for my travels around the world, but more importantly, a sense that I was holding out on them, since it was anticipated that I would share cigarettes out amongst my companions. On the other hand, the response to me by persons who smoked the more inexpensive brands (who almost always were older, married men, from poorer households), was that when I smoked what they smoked and shared cigarettes with them I was not being *maarte* and was demonstrating an affinity with them, the poor (*miskin*).

This latter response may in turn be contrasted to another occasion when I was chatting with some neighbours (who similarly classified themselves as poor) and offered them a pack of *Marlboro*. The pack was passed round to the men, and then, a married woman, who like the majority of women normally do not smoke, reached for the cigarettes and said with a chuckle, *Sulayan ta in ciga ini bini sin hulas-sangsa' niya*. "Let's try these cigarettes which were bought with his sweat and labour." Both her good-natured chuckle and other comments suggested that this was an ironic jab at me, since it was clear that in common with other Americans, it was assumed I generally passed the time enjoying life (*naglife-life hadja*). Interpreted in the light of other encounters, however, the women's statement might also be seen as a way of accepting the cigarettes, whilst at the same time highlighting the *maarte* pretensions of my gift and the ambivalence of their encounters with me since I was counted amongst the wealthy (*dayahan*).

This clearly emerged in the context of other interactions I observed, and in particular in the events leading up to and surrounding the seven day death celebrations (*paghinang pitu*) for Bapa' Kim Sing's (my host family's) sister's husband, who was a well-known and respected religious leader. In contrast to Kim Sing and his family, who considered themselves poor (*miskin*), his sister's family was considered to be relatively well off, if not wealthy (*dayahan*), and lived in a *cement bungalow* house in the housing subdivision of *kasanyangan*. Most of their children were educated, several having previously worked abroad, including one daughter who had

married an Arab whilst working in Saudi. Her eldest daughter, with whom she lived, whilst not a college graduate (several of their children were either graduates or were still studying), was a civil service employee working in the post office, whilst her eldest son was an officer, officially in the *PNP* (Philippine National Police), but also a sometime armed follower (*tindug*) in the private army of the mayor of a nearby municipality and one of the most powerful families (*tau tagkusug*) in Jolo.

Kim Sing had previously related several stories about his sister's eldest daughter (who worked in the post office), whom both he and Babu' Belen (K.S.'s wife) considered to be *maarte*, since she always wore make up, smoked and was considered to be someone who was always styling (*nagistyle-istyle*). However, she had also been the one who had given them their television set and had paid for the single fluorescent light fixture in their home, both of which were considered to be *remembrances* (see 3.3 above). She was also the one who, as the eldest sibling, had taken charge of the death celebrations for her father and had sent word to Kim Sing, inviting the family to come and help out with and participate in the celebrations.

In what was a classic example of kinship and clientage relations, Kim Sing and Belen (who were at the same time in charge of and holding their own 7 days remembrance celebrations for the child of one of Belen's sister's daughters who had recently died) sent out verbal invitations (*nagininvite*) to relatives and other person's in their community, who were obligated to them in someway or another, to accompany them to Kim Sing's sister's home.⁵ On the morning prior to the seventh day celebration some twenty of us accompanied Kim Sing to *kasanyangan* where, over the next twenty-four hours, we assisted in the preparations for the following day's reception and feeding of guests.

Around noontime the following day, the Mayor's wife arrived to see whether or not they had arranged an Imam to oversee the butchering of the cows they were providing. She asked about how they were set for chairs, tables and cutlery, and promised that her husband would be sending along the canvass tarpaulin covering, together with some men to put it up. Dressed in black tights, a black t-shirt with

gold accessories and make up, she was the very embodiment of *istyle*. The same might have been said of her husband who later personally came to manage the construction of a makeshift canvass shelter (accompanied by several personal body guards), dressed in casual slacks, button up polo shirt and leather shoes, sporting *Rayban* glasses, a gold cigarette case and imported *Dunhill* cigarettes, as well as a very prominently displayed pistol.

Not surprisingly, the general comment all round was that she was *maarte*. However, this was quickly qualified by saying to each other as well as to me, *marayaw da isab siya, dang* - she is also a good person, noting that it was she and her husband who were providing the beef to be served at the remembrance celebration, the canvas covering for their celebration, cigarettes (*Marlboro*, *Champion* and *Philip-Morris*) to be served to the guests and workers, and the armed *protection* which surrounded us throughout the night's preparations and next days celebrations. *Ma ulung sila kamu'*. "They have concern or compassion for us." I was told.

What is being signalled by the attribution of compassion and pity to the mayor and his wife, I would argue, is not simply claims on their resources to be dispensed in a charitable fashion in exchange for social legitimacy (as Kerkvliet 1991:269 might argue), but in a much more profound way, claims on their superior status. In other words, like the television and light fixture given to Kim Sing by his niece, the beef, cigarettes and other assistance given to his sister's family by the Mayor are not simply seen as an indication of pity, but a recognition of their participation in and constitutive part of his higher status: their closer proximity to the quality of otherness.

Moreover, whilst clearly articulating a potentially hierarchical and encompassing relation, *maarte* (and this is the true political beauty of the term) retains the ambivalence with which power and wealth are regarded. In the case of Kim Sing's sister's family, although help was forthcoming from the Mayor and his wife, it was clear that there remained an ongoing ambivalence concerning their relation and position with them, especially with respect to one of their siblings being counted amongst his armed followers. Thus, in an inversion of the two sides of the *simple*

only (which is a way of masking social exclusion in terms of commensurability) *maarte* was at once a claim to encompassment in a hierarchical relation, whilst at the same time, an assertion of never being fully encompassed by another. In its extreme, *maarte tuud* (the really *arte*) signals power, wealth or *istyle* without relation: a means for circumscribing and negotiating the limits within which differentiation through the appropriation of otherness is recognized and respected.

Indeed, in what might be considered the final twist to the *simple* and *maarte*, persons sometimes appropriate *maarte* precisely because it is an expression of absolute freedom (cf. Miller 1991). This is particularly the case for the *gay/bantut* whose alternately celebratory and tragic experience is, as I have already suggested (see chapters 5 and 7), and will further argue below, directly linked to their engenderment as the embodiments of power or potency without relation. However, *maarte* is also something which some women (rarely, if ever, men) say they deliberately accentuate as a statement about being *independent*, *modern istyle* women. This is done, amongst other ways, through the use of heavy and bright make up, boisterous mannerisms, and smoking (which is alternately associated with masculinity and socially unproductive or deviant femininity). All of these are recognized expressions of *maarte* and are variously associated with the *gay/bantut*, including the brand Philip-Morris (which in the Philippines is a specific kind of cigarette) which is stereotypically associated both with *maarte* women and the *gay/bantut*. In order to understand more precisely what was being asserted and the wider implications of such action for other women, most of whom neither smoke nor express any desire too, I will briefly outline the respective positioning of men and women, the latter in particular, to the larger symbolic orders which they point and within which (sometimes contrasting and competing) images of femininity are constituted.⁶

9.4 Between *Adat* and *Istyle*: consumption and the reformulations of femininity.

In conversations during which I would as often be the informant for questions about England or the United States, as much as interrogator of the world of the *Muslim*, I would frequently be interrupted by interjectory comments such as, *Kita'a ba in istyle sin manga Miliks*, "Just look at the style of the Americans." In such contexts, *istyle* at first appeared to be similar to *adat* (which might be glossed as the accepted or traditional forms of orderly conduct), a way of saying, "That's the way they do things there". It soon became apparent, however, that *istyle* did not have the same depth or authenticity attributed to local *adat*, which is an important touchstone of Muslim identity. To frame a question in terms of the *istyle* of marriage of the Tausug or Sama, for instance, met with a reply in terms of *adat*, not *istyle*. By contrast, what best expressed the *adat* of the Americans was precisely the notion of *istyle*, or as it was sometime put, *kanya-kanya in istyle*. "Everyone has their own style of doing things." However, this is neither to suggest that there was any necessary homogenized discourse concerning local *adat*, nor, as amply evidenced by the previous section, that there was simply an expressed disdain for the world of American *istyle*. Rather, what emerged, was a much more subtle process of entanglement (Thomas 1991), through which alternative ways of imagining the world were proposed. What I wish to explore in the final part of this chapter is one aspect of this entanglement; that is, the way in which an image of femininity has been and continues to be constructed and contested, amongst other ways through consumption, in relation to *adat* and *istyle*.⁷

As I suggest below, women are both a locus for, and are active agents in, the objectification of local identity and familial status. This does not mean that men are more closely associated with, or more readily appropriate, *istyle*. Rather, precisely because women are keepers of familial status and prestige, they are increasingly expected to embody both *adat* and *istyle*. However, although women readily invest themselves in these projects, they also express a desire to establish an identity on, and of, their own, separate from that of their family and kindred: a desire heightened by the possibility of employment and consumption abroad. It is this tension which not only informs the deliberately contrary aesthetic of *maarte* which women sometimes

express - *istyle* specifically outside or beyond the recognized limits of reproductive and reciprocal sociality - but also, in some instances, informs and accentuates the tension between *adat* and *istyle*, Islam and America.

9.5 Women and the Objectification of Tradition: "Traditional and Modern Attire."

I begin with an analysis of women's clothing styles, and in particular the contrast drawn both between *traditional* and *modern* dress and between the occasions where each is considered to be suitable attire. *Traditional*, *native*, *ethnic* or *istyle kamaasan* (the *istyle* of people of old), as it is sometimes called, designates two main design patterns. The most prevalent is a variety of loose fitting blouses, including the *sambra*, a waist length, short sleeve, laced trim blouse and the *sablay*, a long and flowing, long sleeve blouse traditionally clasped together with a *dubluun*, a gold coin pin, or alternately a semi-precious stone mounted in gold. Less prevalent, but considered even more refined is the *bitawi*, a tight fitting, long sleeve blouse with plunging neckline, decorated with gold buttons, especially associated with weddings. All three of these are worn in conjunction either with loose light trousers, *sawwal*, or a sarong, *habul*, tied at the waist. Additional sarongs or embroidered cloth may also be worn draped across the shoulder (cf. Bruno 1973:12-17 for a complete description).

As can be seen in Figures 9.3 & 9.4 the defining characteristics of *traditional* dress, however, is not simply the design but the texture and colour of the fabric, which for special occasions consists mainly of rich and glossy silks, satins and velvet (imported from Malaysia) in bright but generally single colours most especially yellows, oranges, reds, greens and purples or metallic golds and silvers. This sets it apart, on the one hand, from the everyday *pyjamas* worn around the house which though similar in style to the loose fitting *sablay/sawwal* are often made out of brightly printed but less opulent and cheaper cotton fabric. On the other hand, it also sets it apart from the *formal* attire of *skirt and blouse* and *whole dress* and the *rugged istyle* of denim and tee-shirt, which while obviously encompassing a variety of colours, designs and patterns, tends on the whole towards what might be regarded as a more

conservative taste regime which juxtapose whites and other light pastel colours with earth tones and various shades of darker blue's, grey's, etc.

Apart from dress styles and fabric, there are other features which create as it were a total look. *Traditional* attire almost without exception is accessorised by gold, pearls and shell jewelry and to a lesser extent silver and other precious stones, whereas the *modern* look may include pieces of costume jewelry in addition to gold jewelry. Perhaps the defining characteristic of *modern* style, however, is *make-up/hair-do* from the beauty parlour. This is not to say that *make-up/hair-do* is not used with *traditional* style clothing but it is certainly a more prominent feature of the *modern* ensemble.⁸

There is a fairly straightforward, and perhaps not unexpected, division of occasions where each, the *traditional* and the *modern*, are considered most appropriate if not *de rigueur*. On the one hand, *modern* style predominates at secular calendrical events (including birthdays, school related events such as acquaintance parties and graduation, and Christmas, which while not devoid of religious significance is by contrast to other Islamic celebrations primarily regarded as a secular event). On the other hand, religious and ritual calendrical events (such as *Mawlud al Nabi* [Birth of the Prophet Muhammad], and most especially *Hari Raya Id El Fitri* [the feast day marking the end of *Ramadan*]), in addition to life cycle events, such as weddings and death celebrations are examples of occasions where *traditional* attire is regarded as most appropriate. The point is that like *adat*, *traditional* clothing is seen as part of the larger touchstone of local Islamic identity, the rich textures and bright colours evoking for some persons the splendour and regalia of the past glory and independence of the Sultanate.

Traditional clothing is not absent as a stylistic discourse amongst men. In Zamboanga City in particular, *traditional* clothing was worn by some men on Muslim holidays or to daily prayers in the mosque both as a mark of, and a political statement about, their separate Muslim identity in the face of a Christian Filipino majority, which had in recent elections (1988) returned a no ballot on whether or not the

municipality would be included in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao ARMM.⁹ However, not only are women more likely to wear *traditional* clothing, but they are also more likely to invest in it financially, some women buying the requisite cloth and paying to have a new *sambra* and *sawwal* made each year during Hari Raya. Moreover, greater care is usually taken by women to articulate a complete clothing ensemble, especially during special occasions. In short, *traditional* clothing is, on the whole, not regarded as important for men as it is for women, a point which emerges clearly in the protocols pertaining to weddings.

One of the more interesting developments which has taken place over the last twenty to thirty years with respect to weddings is the increasing trend to follow the *traditional* wedding ceremony (*pahalal kawin*) and the three day celebration which follows (*paglingkud tu*) with a *modern reception*, both events marked by (amongst other things) the clothing appropriate to each (Figures 9.5 and 9.6). The *traditional* portion for the bride necessitates the wearing of the *sambra* or *bitawi*, described previously, and ideally for the groom as well, the tight fitting *kuput kamaasan*, trousers of the men of old, in addition to a short, tight jacket, similar in style to the *bitawi* worn by women. The *modern reception*, on the other hand, necessitates for women what we would regard as the *traditional* white western wedding dress (or some variation), whilst for the groom, this means either western, coat and tie, or the *Barong Tagalog*, the *modern national* Filipino dress shirt.

Where families cannot afford to host two events, however, *istyle*, as it were, gives way to *adat*, although not, as might be expected, because of the comparative expense of *modern* as opposed to *traditional* clothing, since the latter if anything can be more expensive. Rather, even if the family is on a very tight budget, they must ensure that the bride in particular is dressed in a *traditional* outfit. This was brought home to me during early days of field work in the community of Paniran, Zamboanga City where two weddings amongst comparatively poor persons took place, both of which were said to be *elopements*, thus considerably lessening the amount of bride-wealth and the extent of subsequent celebrations.

In the first one, the bride was dressed in *traditional sablay* and *sawwal* whilst the groom was dressed in what would otherwise be described as *simple, modern* long sleeve shirt and slacks. In the second wedding, however, the groom was dressed in a long Arabic style gown complete with headdress, whilst the bride was dressed in a western style wedding gown. While the first wedding passed without comment, except by way of apologies made to me about the wedding being a *simple* affair and not like the splendour of *traditional* weddings, the second was the subject of much criticism. In particular what many considered to be scandalous and disgraceful was the fact that the bride wore a Christian wedding dress for Muslim wedding rites (Figures 9.7-9.9).

The point is that whilst men may at times wear *traditional* dress as a deliberate statement of their identification with a Muslim identity, women are the primary locus for the objectification of tradition. To put it another way, women are defined by and entrusted both with the reproduction and the conservation of tradition. This can be seen in many instances, and articulates with the more widely recognized symbolic position of women as repositories of status-honour and ancestral identity in many of hierarchical societies in the Pacific and Insular Southeast Asia, including the Philippines (cf. Ortner 1981; Errington 1989, 1990; Blanc-Szanton 1990 and Weiner 1989).

Amongst the Tausug, not only was/is there a much higher expectation on women to uphold the prestige of their families by publicly preserving their virginal status as sisters, but also there was a greater expectation that they and not their brothers would, prior to formal courtship and marriage, complete a course of instruction in Qu'ranic reading, which amongst other things would increase the amount of bride-wealth which could be demanded.¹⁰ In many ways the ritual ceremony following the completion of the Qu'ranic reading course (*pagtammatt*), foreshadowed the *traditional* wedding ceremony. Graduates were dressed in bridal-type apparel complete with decorated faces and tiara and were accompanied by a fairy tale house (*maligay*) made out of various rice cakes and sweets, which in a wedding is brought by the grooms family to the bride but at a graduation is presented by students to their teacher

(Figure 9.10 - 9.11). Moreover, not only were/are women sacralized as mothers in terms of Islamic ideology in the growing up of their kindred's *remembrances* (5.4 above), but also they are entrusted as *tagdapuh* (caretakers or guardians) of the families *pusaka*' (ancestral heirlooms), usually gold, but also *traditional* cloth and clothing of the kind described previously.

Whilst women are the symbolic repositories of traditional Muslim identity, this does not mean that they are any less than men expected to embody *istyle*. Just as there has been an increasing emphasis on *modern* receptions, there has also been an increasing emphasis placed by parents on their daughters' education, and one can chart over the last 20-30 years a dramatic increase in the number of women pursuing and obtaining higher academic qualifications and entering *professional* occupations as seen in Table 9.5 below.

Table 9.5 Relative numbers of Men and Women as a percentage of overall population pursuing higher education from 1960 until 1990. (Data compiled from Table 8. of the 1990 Sulu Provincial Profile and Table U4. of 1990 Housing and Population Statistics, Central Statistical Office, Manila)

Date	Men	Women
1960	76% (2512)	24% (809)
1970*	60% (6191)	40% (4171)
1980*	54% (4727)	46% (4066)
1990	49% (12,057)	51% (12,404)

*The apparent decrease in the overall number of men and women pursuing education is due to the fact that the 1970 figures include Tawi-Tawi which was then part of the province of Sulu.

The question is, how to understand such changes? Lacar (1991) who provides substantial documentation of these trends, contends that they are indicative of the positive transformations taking place in Philippine Muslim society as a whole and for Muslim women in particular whom he characterizes as having been in a "desperate"

state with no "significant role" in traditional society. Certainly what one is observing at present is undoubtedly a process of cultural transformation, which has created new opportunities for women in public life. However, it is necessary to further contextualize these transformations.

On the one hand, as I have already suggested, women are no less the locus for the objectification of new traditions than they were and are for the old. For example, education is not only considered to be *pusaka*' (an inheritance), but also is often related to the inflationary amounts of bride-wealth now being demanded for women (doctor's drawing bride-wealth in excess of 200,000 pesos, nurses 100,000+ and teachers between 50-100,000). Moreover, just as the *pagtammam* (graduation from Qu'ranic reading school) stylistically foreshadowed traditional nuptial ceremonies, so too, high school and college graduation ceremonies, foreshadow the *modern* wedding reception, with families splashing out not only on the celebratory meal, but also on *make-up/hair-do*, new dresses, fancy shoes, etc. Thus, it could be argued, following Sahlins (1981, 85), that the current trends and accelerating pace with which women are undertaking, and are expected to undertake, education, etc., is indicative of the internalization and domestication of a new symbolic order.

On the other hand, the process has opened up new possibilities for cultural expression and for contesting ideas of femininity, just as it has, in some instances, accentuated old tensions and contradictions. However, in order to get a glimpse of what these possibilities and contradictions entail, it is necessary both to indicate the historical situation of women who, contrary to what Lacar (1990) suggests, often had a very active public life in "traditional" society (although this is not, as Errington [1990], points out, in itself a sign of being held in high regard or public esteem), and to further explore the intentionalities women express in their roles both as producers and guardians of familial status-identity.

9.6 Women, Slaves, Gold and Gifts: Transformations of Femininity.

Although unmarried women of virginal status (*budjang*), were isolated under the careful *protection* of their families, including their mother, father and brothers, they

emerged from this rather lengthy liminal phase as respected and relatively independent persons who were extremely active in community life, a point which Christina Blanc-Szanton's (1990) similarly makes in her historical account of Visayan women. Warren (1981: 220) notes, for instance, that by the mid-nineteenth century, some of the leading local traders in Sulu were women who owned and managed their own slaves, quoting a nineteenth century observers as saying:

In Sulu, the wives of chiefs are entrusted with the principle management of accounts, and carry on much the trade, it is said that they have considerable knowledge from the Manila captives, who are of a superior class.

At the other end of the social spectrum, whilst captive women slaves were a prime commodity in the traditional polity, often ending up working alongside men in forced agricultural labour, others were taken by and/or given away by powerful persons to followers as concubines or secondary wives. Not only did this secure their manumission and commoner status for their children, but also it provided them with a position in the community within which they could, and apparently did, work to enhance their own and their husband's status. Women are no less important or strategic players in the constitution of local and ancestral identity today, even whilst they remain differentially situated in terms of the possibilities open to them. A primary example of this relates to women and their jewelry (*bulawan/pamulawan*) which whilst clearly identified as being part of Muslim tradition, transcends the boundaries of both *traditional* and *modern istyle*.

On the one hand, gold jewelry continues to be a primary indicator of a woman's social worth or value, a necessary part of any outfit worn outside of the home and a constituting part of a woman's beauty. Thus, girls at a very early age have their ears pierced and are given a set of gold earrings as a *remembrance* from their parents. Gold jewelry passed down to women transgenerationally is often considered to be *pusaka*' (heirlooms). On the other hand, gold constitutes a part of most household's capital resources and is the one part of the *ungsud* (bride-wealth), which belongs exclusively to women. Any gold within the household, apart from the usually small amounts of personal gold jewelry a woman's husband may own, is regarded as being *suku' babai* (a woman's portion).

The significant thing about gold is precisely the articulation between it being a repository of beauty, honour and *remembrances* (social memory and identity) and it being a repository of economic value, an active capital resource (*puun*) for the family. I stress the active nature of gold as a capital resource because gold jewelry is, as often as not, in circulation between the pawnshop and the home, the importance of gold jewelry tied to its ready exchangeability for currency. Significantly, it is women who play a leading role in the circulation of gold jewelry between what might be called its commodity and gift phases (Gregory 1982, Appadurai 1986a, Thomas 1991, Weiner 1992).

Although gold jewelry may be pawned to raise capital (*puun*) to start a business, or when a family is experiencing particular financial difficulty, it appears that gold-jewellery including *remembrances* and *pusaka*' are most often pawned in order to raise money to spend on special food, drink and clothing at *occasions*, including life-cycle and calendrical religious events (*paghinang*) as well as the more recent and increasingly important secular events, notably graduation parties. These occasions are amongst other things about producing shared *remembrances* (social memory), and the ins and outs of gold jewelry are an important part of these complex performative and reproductive movements, both behind the scenes and on the centre stage where gold jewellery is worn and displayed.

Behind the scenes, and as discreetly as possible, gold jewelry is pawned to raise cash for the event. Both the cash as well as the pawning of the gold are gifts of remembrance, and it should be noted that often women outside the immediate household, including affines, pawn their gold to help raise money for a relative or close friend's celebration. The lending of gold-jewellery for display constitutes a further gift of remembrance. Finally, there is the redemption of gold jewelry which involves not just women but men, including husbands, brothers, fathers, and sometimes sons. The repurchase of the jewellery is literally a re-giving of a remembrance. Thus, while not all of a woman's gold-jewellery may in the first instance be *remembrances*, in the process of pawning and reclamation the association between gold and remembrance become so close as to make them almost inseparable.

Nevertheless, a certain tension does exist between, on the one hand, gold which is, as with *pusaka*', already invested with familial identity, status and honour, and/or which through its investment in the status producing events increasingly becomes a repository for and embodiment of social memory and, on the other hand, gold which women acquire on their own and attempt to keep out of the circulation of debts and *remembrances*. This is more likely to be expressed amongst more affluent women, many of whom are involved in *buying and selling* gold jewellery (Moore 1981: 266-269). As one working professional woman put it, one of the reasons she bought gold jewelry for herself was to have, *pangita'an, tanda' sin usaha*, "a memento, a symbol of my labour".

In short, what emerges with respect to women and what the example of gold jewelry perhaps best exemplifies is not only that women are active agents in the creation of as well as a primary locus for the objectification of identity, but also that women desire and, given the opportunity, attempt to create status-identity or beauty in their own right, apart or separate from that as the embodiments of a familial or ancestral identity. Given the fact that women have always played an important role in Sulu's cultural and political economy, I suspect that this tension is not the product of recent historical change such as increased access to education and professional occupation. Rather I would argue in precisely the opposite manner that such changes themselves have gained impetus as they have created new domains within which this tension is expressed. This is especially evident in discussions centred around working abroad, a frequent topic of conversation both among women who have worked abroad and among the many more women who desire to go abroad. Indeed, perhaps the most important sociological development in recent years is the increasing numbers of women (both professional and unskilled) working abroad. This represents a significant shift away from the situation (common to many parts of the Pacific region) in which it was traditionally men who went away and embarked on various trading, slave raiding (as in the traditional Sulu polity) or other expeditions (such as in search of exogenous sources of *ilmu*', cf. Horvatic 1994).

9.7 Working and Spending Abroad: Women and the spatialization of *adat* and *istyle*.

Although I was unable to obtain exact statistics from the POEA (Philippine Overseas Employment Agency) on relative numbers of men and women from Sulu working abroad, data from the questionnaire-survey, which included questions about whether or not the respondent or any of their relatives had worked abroad, I think, are indicative of the general situation.¹¹ Although only 2% (6 of 244) of survey respondents interviewed had themselves worked abroad, well over one-third (39%) of all respondents had one or more relatives working abroad. This is important in several respects, not least of which is the fact that as seen in Table 9.6 below, women not only account for some 70% of those reported to be working abroad but also appear to account for a comparatively higher proportion of professional or skilled workers abroad.

Table. 6. Number of relatives working abroad by gender, occupational status, and place of work.

Occupational Division			Locale Abroad		
	Professional (medical & engineering)	Non-Prof (domestic & labourer)	Mid- East	Other	
Wom	38	35	66	7	73
Men	10	22	26	6	32

There are two main points which I wish to make here with regards to working abroad. First, whilst working abroad does not constitute a transformation of the kind described by Friedman (1990a:116) of unranked youth into great men or great women, it does provide an opportunity for those who would otherwise be marginal players - both women and men - especially amongst the unskilled or non-professional domestic helpers and factory or construction labourers, to participate in and to some extent undermine the exclusive hold over the economy of *istyle* exercised by the political and social elite. Not only are they able to make *quality* and *original*

purchases for themselves, but also, and perhaps more importantly, they become a source of *original quality* for others. Of the respondents who said they had relatives working abroad, a majority (80%) had received some kind of *pasalubong* (welcoming gift) from their relatives abroad, mainly various name-branded clothing, shoes, jewelry, watches and perfume.

Secondly, however, whilst for many persons, (particularly women who work as domestic helpers), life abroad can be a frightening and alienating experience, for other persons, (women, more so than men), it may also be an extremely liberating and fulfilling experience. Both of these extremes emerged in women's narratives of time spent abroad, but it was the latter in particular that emerged in the desire many women expressed to work abroad. Although I have no quantitative data to support the claim, I would say that this is one of the major reasons why increasing numbers of women are pursuing higher education, particularly in the medical professions, mainly as mid-wives and nurses.

In order to illustrate the kind of potential working abroad has for women, I present the case of three women, two of whom had previously worked abroad, the other of whom was in the process of filing papers to go abroad. One of my neighbours in Jolo was a woman who had only recently returned with her younger sister from working in Kuwait, following the Iraqi invasion. Relating their story, Hulma' began by telling me about the experience of her youngest unmarried sister, who as a college drop out was told by her father (a relatively wealthy and powerful leader outside of the town of Jolo) that as she had no qualifications she ought to stay at home until such a time she should be married. Her sister refused, however, and said that she wanted to go abroad, to find her own way in life and provide for herself. Their father was quite angry with her and told her that if she left, then, *bahala' na kaw!* "Your on your own or to hell with you!" Nevertheless, she decided to leave and with the help of her father who eventually relented (since apart from anything else having a son or daughter working abroad is prestigious) later joined Hulma' in Kuwait where the two sisters worked together as domestic helpers in the same house up until the invasion.

Hulma' (who herself was married and at that time had two young children) went on to discuss the way in which parents cultivated an attitude of dependence amongst their children by giving them everything they needed, only to turn around and consume any money which they were able to earn abroad. People did not just work abroad for themselves (*baran-baran nila*), she told me, but for their *family*, for their *parents*. The only way to avoid having one's earning's used up in this way, she said, was to invest it in gold. After returning home from abroad, the gold could be worn until one ran out of money, at which time it could either be sold or pawned to raise the necessary cash.

What was especially poignant about Hulma's story, however, was not simply the expressed tension between discharging her obligation to her parents and saving money by investing in gold, but also the tension between the need to invest in gold for her immediate family, i.e. her children and husband, and the intense desire and immense pleasure of buying and consuming things for and by herself in Kuwait. Framing her comments in terms of regret, she said that since returning home she had undergone a change of thinking with respect to making a living. "It is very true," she said, "making a living is very difficult. If you have money, you should be careful, save money. If I have another chance to work abroad I will try and save money." Explaining these remarks she went on to tell me:

Hulma: At the time when I was abroad I was spoiled. Whatever I saw that I needed I would buy it. My employer asked me, "Why do you throw away your money, is it very easy for you to work, to come to the Arab country? You're not saving. Look at your attitude towards this, like the other Filipinos who come to work here. Look here you are all working as housemaids in Arab countries- you're spoiled with all the money." Calling from Kuwait to Manila, one *Dinar*, one minute. The boss got angry, "Money is nothing to you, that's why you cannot find money. Spoiled with money, or sending money back to relatives. Is it easy for you to work here?"

MJ. What would you buy?

Things to eat- hamburger. *Masarap in hamburger*, "Hamburgers are very delicious." I looked at magazines with food. *Hungry Bunny* [A fast food restaurant in Kuwait] I said, I want that. Very delicious, lots of meat that's why its delicious. That's why my money went. Even when my boss said,

"Hulma', I'll buy for you." I would say I want to buy it with my own money. *Mabaiya' aku magkaun bang sin ku*. "I wanted to eat when I paid for it with my own money."

My sister and I worked in the same house. In one year she was able to buy gold. She did not spend her money like me. In two years I was only able to buy a little gold.

The emphasis on eating with one's own money, and buying things for oneself, obviously subverts the common protocol of parents (especially fathers) and husbands as being the providers and provisioners. More importantly, I would argue, it is an extension of the desire women sometimes express to possess things which are kept out of the circulation of shared *remembrances*. Thus, quite apart from the fact that beef hamburgers are by virtue of their meat content a high status food, it is perhaps not too much to suggest that the *Hungry Bunny* hamburger was especially delicious precisely because unlike gold jewelry there was no possibility that it would become ensnared in the reciprocal exchanges through which objects are transformed into the embodiments of a social identity in which other persons have a symbolic share.

This aspect of abroad, not surprisingly, articulates with the discourse of *istyle*. A good example of this is discussions I had with two other married women (sisters-in-law), one with four children the other with three, for whom a frequent, almost continual, topic of conversation when we met would be their desire to work abroad. At first they told me that they wanted to go abroad both because their children were getting older and they needed to have an increased income in order to support them through private educational institutions so that they would be sure of getting good professional qualifications. They also wanted to buy some land and build a cement house. However, often the discussion would come round to their expressed desire to visit other places, to see the world and to escape the drudgery of watching the children. They wanted to *pasyal* (to go on a walk-about) and to, *Kumita'-kita' istyle nila ha dugayn hula'*. "To look around, to have a look at the *istyle* of persons in other lands," saying they would even be willing to *pick apples* if they had to.

The freedom which they saw as implicit in *istyle* was contrasted to a situation in which according to local protocols, they were supposed to stay at home, to mind the

children, not to dress up or wear make up outside of the home or go out of the house without the permission of their husbands, although as they pointed out themselves, in practise and in comparison with what they had heard about women in the Middle East, they were not highly constrained. In fact, they smoked Philip Morris, wore bright make-up and made pretences at being *maarte*, as an assertion of their independence.

The point is that the trip abroad has further accentuated and increasingly spatialized the at times contradictory intentionalities women express. On the one hand, the actual experience of women working abroad (as at home) continues to be characterized by the tensions expressed, for instance, by Hulma' with regards to investing in gold for her family and buying things by and for herself. On the other hand, however, the world abroad, which is conceptualized in terms of its proximity to America (the "land of the free"), increasingly comes to be identified (both by men and women) with that aspect of *istyle* which always borders on the kind of absolute freedom (Miller 1991) captured by *maarte* and articulated in the notion of *kanya-kanya in style*, doing one's own thing. By the same token, the equally imagined local community has increasingly become reified as a locus of *adat*, understood not just as a touchstone for a separate Muslim identity or as normative protocols encoded in traditional law, but also as the locus of reproductive sexuality and remembrancing which defines proper women.

Thus, one arrives back at the tension in the process of appropriative transformation between what I have argued are understood to be two potentially contradictory orders of relations, the *ilmu' Islam* and the *ilmu' Milikan*, *adat* and *istyle*, and women, no less than men, are at the heart of this process of cultural transformation. Not only are they increasingly expected to embody both, but also they must negotiate the contrasting implications of each for the way in which they are defined as women. As I shall argue in the last chapter, the *bantut* provide an important means for doing precisely that.

Endnotes

1. Table 9.7 showing relative numbers of Men and Women who smoke.

	Women	Men	Gay
Resp. who say they smoke frequently. (7+ pack a week)	1	44	6
Resp. who say they smoke occasionally. (3+ pack a week)	3	19	5
Resp. who say they rarely smoke. (<1 pack a week)	4	10	0
Resp. who say they smoke as percentage of overall total no. of respondents by gender.	7%	63%	92%
	N=113	N=115	N=12

2. For the wealthy elite, in fact, *Levi's* and *Marlboro* are considered somewhat *passe*. Rather what is required are things which combine original quality with more cosmopolitan sophistication. Thus, these persons will often smoke *Dunhill* cigarettes and are more likely to wear clothing bought at department or speciality botique stores in Zamboang, Cebu Manila and/or have clothes tailored in Zamboanga or Manila, favouring *formal* over *casual* wear.

For poorer persons, on the other hand, the favourite shopping place for clothing is the *juwal murah* (Malay, things sold for cheap) which sells second hand clothing bought in Malaysia and Singapore at greatly reduced prices (see Table 9.8 below on relative percentages of poor and wealthy shopping in department stores and the *juwal murah* respectively). The important thing for the poor, as they express it, is that they are able to buy 'original quality' but at a fraction of the cost the wealthy pay. Indeed, the fact that the clothing is second hand (presumed to have been worn by wealthy individuals) is seen by some as indicative of its original quality status.

Table 9.8 Frequency with which respondents reported going to the Department Store and Juwal Murah by Income.

	Department Store				Juwal Murah			
	Never	Rare	Some	Freq.	Never	Rare	Some	Freq.
50+	27%	36%	27%	10%	14%	18%	18%	50%
100+	8%	20%	54%	18%	12%	22%	41%	25%
500+	4%	20%	28%	48%	14%	49%	27%	10%
1000+	0%	35%	6%	59%	35%	35%	24%	6%

3. Readers familiar with Philippine studies will note that I have appropriated the term "everyday politics", from Kerkvliet's (1991) recent monograph entitled, *Everyday Politics in the Philippines*, in which he provides an extremely insightful and provoking analysis of political encounter outside the sphere of traditional electoral politics and precisely within those spheres of social action generally regarded as

passive and devoid of contention. Consumption I argue is precisely one such sphere of contestation, although it is largely ignored in Kerkvliet's work except as a general index of wealth or status which is glossed as a 'standard of living' (1991: 61).

4. There is an ethnic dimension to *istyle* (style) here, which is, in part explicit in the ethnic designation Sama. Briefly, the Sama, particularly those who consider themselves the Sama *to'ongan* (the real Sama, Sama *Dilaut*) might be seen, and certainly often see themselves as occupying a position on the extreme end of the continuum of commensal solidarity, of going together and being the same. Indeed, much like the situation amongst the Muria Gonds described by Gell (1986), Sama persons are socially constrained in terms of the amount of ostentatious consumption which they can indulge in, and will not often decorate their house beyond the bare minimum even if and when they can afford it, lest they become (as they see it) the target of another's envy, greed and maliciousness. However, for the most part the Sama do not regard this as a heavy social burden. In fact, they differentiate themselves from the Tausug on the basis that all Tausug are *maarte*, that is to say, ostentatious, which according to the Sama in part explains why they are trouble makers and crooks (*jahulaka*). The Tausug, on the other hand, regard the Sama (particularly the *Sama Bajaw*) as being on the marginal fringes of social acceptability - that is, uneducated, uncultured, illiterate and dirty (cf. Richard Stone 1962).

5. Kim Sing's entourage included the men of one family for whom he had recently mediated a divorce settlement in their (the woman's family) favour.

6. See Table 9.1 on brand preferences for women and Table 9.7 (footnote 1 above) for relative percentages of men and women smokers.

7. I was prompted to explore the relation between adat and *istyle* after reading Michael Peletz's (1993) article on ethnographic dialogue, politics and *adat* in Malaysia.

8. Women traditionally were made up for weddings and Qu'ranic reading graduation ceremonies (*pagtammatt*) with white faces and stylized jet black eyebrows similar to that in other parts of Indonesia (cf. Figure 9.11).

9. The traditional clothing worn by men often (but not always, and not always as a complete ensemble) includes the loose flowing trousers (*sawwal*) a special 'Muslim' money belt and the *pis siyabbitt* (a square handkerchief like cloth) variously worn as a Turban or carried as a handkerchief. Out of all local clothing the *pis siyabbitt* is, in fact, the most authentically 'traditional' in as much as unlike women's clothing, the cloth is woven locally. Ironically, however, most of the traditional weaving centers for the *pis siyabbitt* on the Island of Jolo have all but disappeared (Szanton 1973), with the exception of Muslim weavers who are sponsored and supported by the Catholic Notre Dame de Jolo community development projects, who both sell the cloth as turbans/handkerchiefs, but also have (partly drawing on the patronage of the *gay* community for design ideas) used the cloth to produce document folders, 'bum

bags' and back packs.

10. Kiefer (1972b:126) notes the difference in completion rates between men and women undertaking traditional Qu'ranic reading instruction, but puts this down to the fact that young men are unable to put up with the discipline required of them.

11. The data I have on overseas workers is admittedly weak. The only other data available, however, comes from the 1990 Census which suggests there are just over 800 overseas from the province of Sulu, although it does not give a breakdown by sex. Jackson (1990:78) reports between .7 - 5.2% of families in Sulu are dependent on overseas remittances. If the figures I have are in any way indicative of general trends, then it appears that Sulu is (compared to other parts of the Philippines) unique in the number of women and comparative number of professionals working abroad, mainly in the middle east. Arcinas (1986) notes that 75% of workers in the Middle East were men, but in 1983 only 10.4% were employed in professional occupations, down from 65.6% in professional employment in 1973.



Figures 9.1 and 9.2 Example of "Asian Homes" interior (above), and poorer home exhibiting home decoration/ consumption as accumulation (below). Indeed, Mrs. Saddam (as she called herself as a joke on my behalf as an American) insisted that I include the two fans in the picture.





Figures 9.3 and 9.4 Women in 'traditional' Muslim attire celebrating the end of Ramadan.





Figures 9.5 and 9.6 Bride in 'traditional' wedding attire and (with bridesmaid) in 'modern' wedding attire.



Figures 9.7 and 9.8 (Above) Bride and groom from wedding viewed as unacceptable, because the woman wore a 'Christian' wedding dress for 'Muslim' wedding rites.

Figure 9.9 (Below) Groom and bride from wedding considered *simple*, but appropriate, since the bride wore 'traditional' Muslim attire.





Figures 9.10 and 9.11 (Above) children at the pagtammatt ('graduation' or first public reading of Qur'an [reproduced from Kiefer 1972]) and (below) high school graduation celebration (note the white dress, make-up and styled hair of celebrant, centre).



Chapter 10. Negotiating Style and Mediating Beauty: Identity, Cultural Transformation and Transgendering.

In this chapter I bring together different strands of the thesis in order to indicate some of the various, if partial, connections which might be made in relation to questions of local identity, power, gender and cultural transformation. I begin by reviewing the specific historical context and cultural logic within which the *gay/bantut* have been valorized as persons who, having been overwhelmed by the force of political violence and overexposed to a potent cultural otherness, are seen to embody both impotent masculinity and defiled femininity: one means through which persons have attempted to mediate the consequence and processes of cultural transformation in the face of an often hostile post-colonial state. However, it is not simply that the *bantut* are engendered as symbolic foils, but that they have been endowed as the creative producers of cultural difference, enabling an ongoing process of cultural creolization. Against this backdrop I return to consider the *gay* beauty contests which perhaps best encapsulates some of the different strategic interests at work in *gay/bantut* transgendering and in particular the dual process whereby the *gay/bantut* are collectively endowed as the embodiments and creative producers of difference, and are circumscribed within the domain of *over-exposed*.

Finally, I consider the potential implications of this thesis for a wider understanding of transgendering / transvestism. Specifically, I suggest that transvestism / transgendering and other forms of sexual and gender ambiguity may not only reveal, but also be key sites for contesting and negotiating, the various ways in which liminality, considered as an ongoing process of transformation, is culturally instituted. In other words, transvestism / transgendering are not simply about cultural transformation, but rather, in a more profound way, about the way in which the process of transformation itself is conceptualized and culturally engendered.

10.1 On being "over-exposed": Beauty, Political Violence and the Valorization of Bantut Engenderment.

The general perception in Jolo is that the population of *gay/bantut* has grown in recent years, coinciding with the burgeoning beauty parlour business and the introduction of *Miss Gay Beauty* contests. I did not attempt to do a comprehensive census of *gay/bantut* in Jolo, but based on informal counts and on informant estimates I would place the number of recognized *gay/bantut* - that is those who recognize themselves as *gay* and/or those who are recognized as *bantut* - at around 500, which would be approximately 3% out of a male population of 17,000 over the age of 15.¹ While the small numbers might suggest that the *bantut* are peripheral to larger social processes, the comically cynical and ironic statements made about them such as, "*simung sung na maas mataud in manga bantut dayn sin usug* - in a short while there will be more *bantut* than men", underline their importance in the local cultural economy of signs. However, I am not suggesting that there has been or continues to be any actual overall increase in the number of *gay/bantut*, which in any case would be difficult to substantiate or quantify. Rather what I offer here is a reading of the particular cultural logic within which the perceived increase, and symbolic valorization of, the *gay/bantut* is related to the recent political violence and to their emergence as a nodal point in the ongoing negotiation of local Muslim identity.

It is necessary to go back to the dissolution of the Sultanate at the turn of the century, which not only, as I suggested in an earlier chapter, marked a new phase in the development of a Muslim identity, but also in particular marked a new phase in the crystallization of male gender and sexual identities centred around violent resistance. This is seen in the ritual symbolism surrounding *parrang sabbil*, which Kiefer (1988) describes as an institutionalized individual *jihad* adopted in response to colonial intrusion.² In preparation for what was ultimately a ritualized form of defensive suicide, the men (individual *sabbil*'s were exclusively male) would be bathed, groomed (according to some persons this involved plucking the eyebrows and trimming the fingernails, whilst others have it that an individual was completely shaved) and clothed in the manner which would otherwise be typical for a corpse.

The one significant difference, between the preparation of the corpse and ritual suicide, however, was that the penis would be tightly bound in an upright position. Kiefer (1988:58), while insightfully arguing that the *parrang sabbil* reflects the greatest expression of Tausug male values, uniting the man of piety and the man of action, leaves unexplored the full implications of the bound penis in this.³ The point is, I would argue, that the male body was not simply, as in circumcision, inscribed as a cipher of an Islamic identity, but rather that the body became further valorized as the crucial site for the realization of a fully ethnicized gender identity. In other words, masculinity, which was realized through becoming a sexual penetrator / inseminator, and Muslimness, which was realized through the defence of Islam, became intertwined in the body of the Muslim warrior. It is this linkage between sexuality and violent resistance which is seen, for example, in the relationship between the rite of circumcision (*pagIslam*, to become or enter into Islam), and the acquisition of the *ilmu pagkausug* (the knowledge-power of masculinity), which is indexed in bravery, courage and sexual potency, the explicit references to legendary *sabbil*'s as handsome and beautiful (Kiefer 1988; Tan 1977) highlighting Kiefer's description of *isug* (bravery, aggressiveness) as the aesthetic ideal of masculinity.

It is important to note that there are no longer any individual *sabbils* as such. Nevertheless, any person who dies in the normal course of fighting Philippine government forces is considered to be *sabbil* (Kiefer 1988:56). Indeed, the testimony left by a dying BMA (Bangsa Moro Army, the military wing of the MNLF) soldier on a wall in the Notre Dame de Jolo college, presumably with his own blood, during the occupation and siege of the town of Jolo in February 1974, underscores the continuing force of the notion of the *parrang sabbil* in sanctioning violent resistance: "*In kami parang sabil. Nagbaogbog kami sin hulah iban bangsa agama. We are [committing] ritual suicide. We are committed to the defense of our land and the community [or nation] of believers.*" Significantly the rise in the number of *bantut* is traced back to these events in February 1974, and in particular to the bombardment and burning of Jolo by the Philippine Navy following the BMA's brief capture of Jolo town and the subsequent period of Christian Filipino military governorship established in the town which came to be known as the GHQ or General

Headquarters which lasted into the early 1980's.

Some persons suggested that the rise in the number of *bantut* and *bantut* beauty parlours was simply the product of acculturation to *Bisaya*' culture brought in by the increased number of soldiers from other parts of the Christian Philippines. This explanation, in itself, is interesting in as much as it attributes the expansion in the number of *bantut* to the influence of an alien culture, and in answer to the question "why are the bantut increasing in number now?- on the questionnaire-survey, the most frequent response was *nalamin*, influence (Table 10.1 below). The word *lamin* is often used in association with disease and illness, especially those which are very contagious, but in reference to the *bantut* was often used in conjunction with *singud* or appropriative imitation.

Table 10.1 Why are the *bantut* increasing in numbers now?

<u>Influence (<i>nalamin</i>).</u>	74
Fate/will of God.	14
Society accepts them.	11
Society is too permissive.	11
Failure of family/community.	10
Want to be women, want to be that way.	10
Inborn/inheritance.	8
The world has turned upside down; sickness of the land.	7
Because of work/business.	5
Biological, psychological reasons.	4
Unity of <i>gays</i> .	3
Lack of religion.	2
Don't know, no answer	67

However, this apparently innocuous explanation of foreign influence has a much darker side. As in many parts of the Philippines during the martial law period,

military abuses were rife and largely went unchecked and unreported in Sulu. According to most of those residents who remained in Jolo after the town was razed (some of whom compared it to the prior period of military rule under the Japanese occupation) soldiers would patrol the streets looking for a *kursinada*, that is, a person whom they could *target* and in particular the Muslim Tausug whom they could physically abuse or *salvage* - a common term used throughout the Philippines to describe the summary execution of individuals. Thus, it was suggested that the rise in the number of *bantut* began when some men in the face of such abuses lost their *isug* or *umagad*, their manliness or courage, and their normally assertive manner by imitating (*singuran*) the style of and becoming transformed into the flaccid and impotent *bantut*.

Having lost their *isug* (manliness) and by extension the *ilmu' pagkausug*- the knowledge power of continuing manhood which is identified with, as it is defined by, the defense of Islam, the *bantut* are defined as unrealized, impotent, "not-men", a condition which is seen as potentially transferable from the *bantut* to other men through excessive and prolonged especially sexual contact with them. At the same time, as a consequence of the ongoing process of appropriative imitation or *exposure*, they are seen to have been overwhelmed and transformed by a potent otherness, so that the femininity the *bantut* are seen to embody and exemplify, is not that of real women. Indeed, if the manliness which the *bantut* are seen to have lost and the femininity against which they are defined as not-women is associated with Islam, then what the *bantut* are seen to have been *overexposed* to is none other than an imagined global American otherness, filtered through the Christian Philippine State.

The *bantut* are in this respect cross-referenced with women of loose morals who are thought to wear excessive make up and dress indecently (*burikat*), prostitutes (*puta*), Christian Filipino film stars (*artista*) of the *bald* or *bold* variety, as well as foreign women (*milikan*, American) in the *fighting fish*, x-rated video movies, whose *istyle* of sex is something which men on the one hand talk about capturing (*singuran*) but which can only be safely enacted with prostitutes, outside the scope of normal sociality and recognized sexuality. As one man put it, "They add to what a woman

is. They are [like] bent (deviant), spoiled, unmarried women (*budjang*)."

What I am suggesting is that it is within the context of recent state political violence that there has not only been an increasing valorization of the category *bantut* as marking out a distinct category of person (which as Kiefer [1967]; personal communication [1991] suggests previously marked out a range of behavioural characteristics and activities such as cross-dressing, homosexuality and impotence) but also a semantic shift, or perhaps better a redeployment, of transvestite figures away from simply being metaphors of ancestral potency and unity towards being, in Garber's (1993) terms, metaphors for cultural anxiety and category crises. On the one hand, the *bantut* might be seen as the primary negative exemplars or foils of true masculinity and true femininity (defined not in terms of their opposition to each other, but in terms of their opposition to an outside other), and as symbolic warnings about the dangers of *overexposure* (an interpretation which, as I noted in the introduction, has been variously suggested for the Tahitian *mahu* and the Samoan *fa'fafine* (Levy 1971, Shore 1981: 209-211, Mageo 1992). On the other hand, having been *overexposed*, they might also be seen as a negotiable form of otherness: symbolic compliments to the Muslim warriors in the maintenance of an inviolable social identity and the encompassment of a potentially overwhelming force through their unproductive sexuality. Thus, in a ironic twist, it is now the *bantut* who are said to go on *patrul* (patrol) in the marine barracks just as it is now the *Bisaya*' soldier which is widely seen as being the number one *kursinada* or target of what is commonly said to be the voracious sexual desire of the *bantut*, inverting the violent relationship which held and to a large extent still holds between the Christian Military and the Muslim Tausug.

However, it is important to reiterate that the *bantut* are constructed not simply as biologically unproductive and sexually impotent persons, but more profoundly as socially unproductive persons, that is, those who have not and cannot be *remembered*. Excluding the *gay/bantut* from the transactions through which social memory - *remembrances* - are produced, and, more particularly, circumscribing them within the sphere of commodity transactions, as is done both by local men in their

relationships with the *gays* (see chapter 7) and by persons more generally in the purchase of their services in the beauty parlours (see Chapter 8) - which represents another redeployment and further extension of the way in which transvestite/homosexuals were engendered (see chapter 5.) - is another way of making explicit the boundaries of local identity: one means, amongst others, through which persons have sought to re-assert autonomy, if not over the political conditions under which cultural otherness is confronted, at least, over the process of transformative appropriation.

As I have outlined in detail above (Chapter 8) the *bantut* are commonly regarded as masters of *istyle*, masters of *singuran* (appropriative transformation), collectively endowed as the creative producers of an imagined otherness. However, these images, like the *bantut* and person's relationships with the *bantut*, are deliberately commoditized or commodified - even when, as is the case with *gay* relations with young men, they are given by the *gays* as gifts - as things which may be purchased or acquired, but which in and of themselves are never allowed to realize their social potential. Rather, it is only as these images are appropriated and re-invested in *remembrancing* relations, away from the *bantut*, that they enter into social memory and become an integral part of local identity. In other words, it is the transactional process of *remembrancing* itself, which forms both the first point of contact as well as the last line of defense against cultural colonization. As Nicholas Thomas (1991; see also Rafael 1988) has demonstrated with respect to early contact in the Pacific, it is the existence of, and insistence on, the differentiated transactional trajectories of gift and commodities which made possible (for colonizer and colonized alike) both the containment and the appropriation of cultural otherness.

The explicit discourse of separate traditions and cultural forms seemingly contrasts with the beauty purveyed by the *gays* where being Muslim - in the local sense - was a minor referent amongst many, a global cosmopolitanism specifically constructed as greater than and encompassing the sum of its parts. However, it was precisely the ability to render or retranslate local objects within a global forum, whilst at the same time, retranslating global forms within and valorized in terms of local sensibilities,

which was seen as one of many *bantut* talents, as it was seen by *gays* as one of their chief projects. *Native modern style* is what one of the town's leading *gay* tailor calls it. He told me that although he much prefers and is really interested in Italian designers, what was important and exciting for him, working in Sulu as compared to Zamboanga or other parts of the Philippines where clothing fashions simply imitated foreign style, was that the local traditions and cultures presented such rich and *authentic* material for creative fashion design. A similar view was expressed by another *gay* attempting to launch a costume jewellery business, combining amongst other things various local products and materials, such as coral and cloth, with more synthetic, none-precious, materials which are not ordinarily considered jewellery in the local context. Thus, for instance, in the *Mutya Ng Jolo 1992* (Beauty or pearl of Jolo) women's beauty contest (Figures 10.1 and 10.2), which was largely organized, run and staged by the *gays* in Jolo, much use was made of *native* cloth but transformed such that it could be juxtaposed with other *fashion designs* scooped from imported fashion magazines. The contestants introduced themselves beginning with the Islamic greeting *Assalamu waliakum warah matullahi albarakatu*, and local dance forms were inter-mixed with ballet, Hawaiian and rap dance routines.

Amongst the wealthy and cultural elite, it is precisely this *native modern style* which predominates. Five daily prayers take place within "modern", "cement", "semi-bungalow" homes decorated in conjunction with suggestions from "Asian Homes" (Chapter 9). Traditional materials, such as the woven *pis*, bladed weapons and bronze vessels, are juxtaposed to souvenirs brought back from trips abroad, juxtaposed with prayer rugs, juxtaposed with hanging "Japanese" lanterns in the front garden and Chinese porcelain in the front room. This is even more pronounced in other social domains, such as weddings, for which *gays* are called upon not only as hair-dressers and make-up specialist, but also as technical advisor/designers for everything from costumes to decoration. In particular, a new *native modern style* of wedding is emerging broaching the separation of traditional and modern or *adat-shari'a* (traditional and Islamic practises) and *istyle* (modern American practises), reportedly increasing the already inflationary bride-wealth transactions (which is also tied to or at least associated with educated and professional women).

In one of the most elaborate ceremonies, which resembled more of a stage/theatre production than it did a wedding, the bride was born into a packed auditorium in a *palanquin* whilst a fully uniformed choir sang Filipino choral music. The bride (a medical professional), dressed in a stylistically elaborated *bitawi* (traditional women's wedding attire cf. Chapter 9) then walked down to the catwalk through warriors to join her place on the main stage. The traditional ceremony of *bakul lima*, where Imam and bridegroom place right hands and thumbs together for the wedding ritual, was done on a round dias like platform at the end of the catwalk. Then, after circling the brides head with the bridegroom's thumb three times and having placed the bridegrooms thumb on the bride's forehead symbolically consummating the marriage, the *dias* itself began to move in a circle imitating mechanically the traditional turning round of bride and groom, all to the accompaniment of the choir.

The point is that the *bantut* are more than simply symbolic foils, and figures of passive resistance; symbolic displacements for the exclusionary violence of state enforced assimilation. Rather, they are mediatory figures who, by their participation in the transformation of traditional clothing into such things as "modern native style", enable, most especially, for the wealthy power-elite, an ongoing process of, creolization or localization through which the boundaries of local identity and global otherness are made negotiable, by their objectification and mutual reconstitution in the liminal. In the penultimate section of this chapter I return to the *gay* beauty contest in order to suggest and explore how the wealthy-elites, and other interests, including that of the *gay/bantut*, are constituted and employed in these processes. *Gay* beauty contests, like the many individual *gay* life-stories about which I have written in this thesis, are multi-layered and polysemic texts. I argue that this multi-dimensionality represents various elaborations of lived contradictions rooted in the transformations of gender, hierarchy, identity and power, which are posited, as differentially experienced and contested, in the various historically informed idioms of Islam and America.

10.2 Viewing the Denouement: Ritual Transformations in the Tragic-Comedy of Gay Beauty Contests.

I suggested at the outset that transvestite-gay beauty contests were ritual performances, the central focus of which was the local constitution and encompassment of a potent and global cultural other. As ritual performances beauty contests may be seen to operate simultaneously at several different levels (cf. Wilk, et. al. forthcoming). Following Peacock (1968) one might argue that beauty contests are transitional processes (Van Gennep 1961; Turner 1968, 1974), transformational rites, which enable and actively shape and reshape participants' perceptions of, and orientations towards, the world (cf. also Kapferer 1991). Looked at in this way, the transvestite-gay beauty contests might be seen as a means for negotiating and reformulating the boundaries between local identity, the state and cultural otherness. At the same time one might view the beauty contests not just as symbolic condensations of central cultural themes (Geertz 1973), such as the place of cultural otherness as both an index of, and constitutive part of, potency and self-transformation, but as aesthetically elaborated revealings of, commentaries on and confrontations with the contradictory, contingent and arbitrary nature of cultural life (cf. Newton 1979, Butler 1990).⁴ Looked at in this way, beauty contests, might be seen less as cultural performances, than as ways of exploring and contesting the way in which power is culturally formulated and instituted. In this respect it is necessary to extend Peacock's argument by suggesting that neither the audience nor the performers are simply passive participants or onlookers, who are simply confronted with, or subjected to, various processes of revelation or transformation, but are themselves active and strategic agents in the process of transformative appropriation (Atkinson 1989).

For *gays*, beauty contests are regarded as celebratory events or "happenings", and are best expressive of what is for many, particularly younger *gays*, seen to be one of the defining characteristics of *gay* life, that is, being happy, and having enjoyment (*nagenjoy*). Beauty contests encapsulate the sense of empowerment and pleasure articulated in the notion of *exposing my beauty* which, as I have previously noted (see chapter 6.7), is sometimes associated with, and is likened to, sexual desire. As one

younger *gay*, a frequent finalist and sometime winner of beauty contests, told me:

First, I really wanted to go to school. Now my classes are gone to the wind and all I want to do is participate in contest, and am always thinking about when the next context is. There is another contest in November. We are always looking and listening out for when the next contest will be. It has become like a sexual craving for me to participate. I want to *expose my beauty*. It is enjoyment.

There is another aspect to this, however, in as much as beauty contests are, as the name suggests, competitive events, for which *gays* invest considerable time, energy and money preparing costumes, rehearsing dance routines, and perfecting recitations. In fact, whilst in the run up to a beauty contest *gays* will often help each other out exchanging clothing, accessories and make up, at the beginning of a contest, comraderie gives way to fierce competitiveness, so that as they say, "Good luck, may the best woman win, and *bahala' na sila* - to hell with the rest!", an attitude which was only perceptible outside of the dressing room when, as was often the case, the numerous contestants on a usually small stage battled as gracefully as possible for positions of "best exposure".

This is also an important aspect of beauty parlour rivalry since in many contests each parlour will sponsor one or more of their beauticians, or another *gay* closely associated with a particular parlour, as their contestant, and the results of the beauty contests, will often be discussed and debated between them for weeks and indeed months and years afterwards. Thus, for instance when I left the field in July 1992, the *gay* community was still discussing the 1990 *Miss Gay International*, Jolo, at the end of which there was a scene over who was the rightful winner. Detractors suggested that the winning contestant was awarded first place to stop her from tearing the place apart (according to one report she had thrown a prop at another *gay* backstage). For her part, and those of her friends, it was suggested that she really was the winner and that she was merely defending her position as winner against another contestant who had attempted to *cook* the results.

As an older "more mature" *gay* told me when I asked h/er about beauty contests:

MJ. The *gays* really get a kick out of participating, why is that?

Gay: That's the only happenings, that *gays* feel like a model, they can show anything they want, talent, when they have contest. So if you have some beauty, so be sure, in your heart you feel you have a chance to win. So people will tease, criticise each other. "Your ugly!" "You are not good enough!" They argue, fight. Sometimes the board of judges are close to someone, makes one discouraged. If you are doing that with *gays*, don't quarrel, anyways it's just play. "You win you lose" You choose. If you win, "Thank you." if not "Thank you". But the *bantut* they don't want it that way, they only want to win, so they argue, fight.

Contrary to what might be expected, however, these *gays* were not battling over any monetary award. Finalist and winners only receive trophies, plaques, ribbons, and special product line packages, such as make-up and perfume from Avon dealers. Nor do *gays*, despite the widely articulated project of status transformation, see participation in beauty contests as a means out of "poverty" or a peripheral "backwater" as has been suggested of Thai transvestite beauty contestant, the *kathoi* (Channel 4 production) since, unlike Thailand, there are no national competitions from which to launch careers as entertainers in the metropole.

Rather what *gays* are contesting, is precisely their possession of, and hold over, the knowledge-power (potency) of beauty which is demonstrated by their ability to embody and articulate, with seemingly as little effort as possible, the total ensemble of elements in the beauty contests; beautiful faces, sculpted bodies, glamorous costumes, English language, and various performative talents. More specifically, their possession of beauty is demonstrated in their ability to evince and elicit the affirmation of these effects from the audience and the judges. As Atkinson (1989), amongst others (cf. Anderson 1972; Geertz 1980; Keeler 1987) have demonstrated, potency in Southeast Asia is indexed either in the number of followers/clients one has and/or the size of an audience one is able to attract. The point for *gays* is that in the beauty contests, as in the beauty parlours, the sense of enjoyment and empowerment, as well as the source of conflict between them, emerges in their attempts to draw, and elicit a positive response from, not just the judges, but from the audience as well.

On the other hand, what *gays* are contesting (both amongst themselves as with the audience) is not just the *quality* or measure of potency which they possess, but also the nature of the transformation which they see themselves enacting through exposing their beauty. As I suggested above (see 7.6) America and beauty, in *gay* imaginations, represent the possible/impossible site for the realization of their transgenderal projects (including true love relations). Nowhere is this more clearly articulated than in the context of beauty contests. As some *gays* put it, "I want to expose my beauty, so the world will know that I am a woman."

The particular image(s) of femininity which *gays* attempt to embody although varied draw on images which are commonly presented in the media, educational institutions and in the political rhetoric of state institutions (cf. Blanc-Szanton 1990: 379-373). *Gays* clearly identify themselves as progressive, educated, and independent as well as glamorous, sophisticated and cosmopolitan women, as signalled amongst other things on their *biodata* in the appropriation of *artista's* (moviestar's), names, educational qualifications, body measurements as well as in the elaborate stage performances and wearing of "cocktail" or "evening" gowns and swimsuits. At the same time, however, *gays* also project a shy, quiet, self-effacing image of femininity, defined primarily in terms of motherhood and domesticity, creating what, following Blanc-Szanton, might be called an image of the "modern woman of traditional virtue". This image was seen to be exemplified, amongst others, by Cory Aquino and was expressed not only by the frequent reference to familial obligations, civic responsibility and professional employment as teachers, nurses, doctors, etc, but also signalled by the importance given both to the displays of national and ethnic costumes and the rhetoric of national politics.

In aligning themselves with these images of femininity, and specifically in juxtaposing the glamorous with the maternal, what *gays* are specifically attempting is to distance themselves from associations with the vulgar, indecent and the *overexposed*, and ally themselves not just with a socially acceptable, but high status, image of femininity. As *Miss Gay International* 1990 (whose attempts to distance herself from the seriousness of the contest by calling attention to the irony of the contests are doubly

ironic since she was at the centre of the dispute over who actually won the contest) told me when I asked her about beauty contest and the image of women purveyed in the contests:

MJ. About beauty contests, have you participated in many now.

Jess: Yes, the first was in 1985, when I was still studying, then next time I joined a beauty contest in Zamboanga, I was one of the 15 finalist there. And then I joined again [in Zamboanga] in 1989 - the one that was in the picture I showed you - another of the 15 finalist. Then, that same year, the Jolo Jaycees also held a contest in 1989, and I became one of the five finalist, and then last year I became *Miss Gay International* in Jolo.

MJ. This year are you planning to participate?

Jess: No, because you have to spend a lot of money for that, although when I participate in the contest, I don't have a feeling that I will win or be a finalist. I just want to satisfy myself that I am a woman. By just that one night of parading in swimsuit, evening gown- some sort of ironical version of an ironical version of a Miss Universe beauty pageant. Some sort of thing like that. Fantasizing that you are a woman, parading in evening gown, and the people are clapping their hands showing their appreciation.

MJ. Is it true you feel like a woman inside?

Jess. Maybe, but no one can also tell how a woman feels. I can say that I am a woman, but even myself, I am not aware of how a woman really feels.

MJ. So what is your vision of an ideal woman. When you are participating in the contest, what is it your trying to portray? Woman as what? Its like this, I see these contest, and they say "I am trying to be like a woman." But obviously the woman they are portraying is not like the woman I meet everyday in the Philippines. It is a very fashionable woman, a woman with pretensions to high society. And then in the question and answer time, they are expected to be educated and to be able to respond well. What is this vision of a woman you are after?

Jess. First thing when I join a contest, I always make it a point that I will appear dignified, not being some sort of a left over, not joining just to participate and then appearing with no personality at all, so I think my vision for that is that women should be proper. Especially when wearing the swimsuit and you are exposing your body. So I tend to project myself as prim and proper as I could. And I am also trying to project myself not as a fashionable women, but as a woman who can carry herself well. That's the first thing I do. I never try to over expose myself and then outdoing the other contestants. I just try to be as natural as a women could be, and people notice me because of that. Not just run of the mill type *gay* or woman I should say. Because even in female beauty contest you can see women walking like *gays*. Exaggerated. So I am trying to project a proper women, which is the right

thing for women to be even in public.

Yet it is precisely in this regard that *gay* attempts are thwarted. On the one hand, the *bantut* are regarded in the first instance as impotent men, signed amongst other things in their bound penis, a frequent point of comment, both amongst men and women at the beauty contests, who sometimes suggested that the reason it was so easy for the *bantut* to conceal their genitals was because they were so small. Although never directly articulated as such the bound and tucked-under penis of the *gay/bantut* beauty queens might also be seen as a striking symbolic inversion of the bound but erect penis of the *parrang sabbil*. On the other hand, the more the *gay* contestants strive to present themselves as respectable (if cosmopolitan) women, the more the *M.C.*, usually a straight man or woman, with the support of the audience, will seek to draw out their sexuality, often with barely hidden references to anal intercourse, which as I have earlier suggested is read less in terms of homosexuality, than it is in terms of the desecration of women's bodies which are sacralized in terms of Islamic ideology. This articulates moreover with the alternating desire for and appreciation of the elaborate costumes, beautifully made up faces, perfected karaoke performance and well recited answers, and the expectation, indeed anticipation, of the comic release which comes with the loose padded bra, lost heels, sagging hose, stuttered speech, or the rare but even more hilarious indiscrete genital⁵, which is subject to the mimicry and laughter of the audience.

In thinking about what is happening in these performances, and in particular the dual movement by which the *gay/bantut* are at once celebrated and symbolically circumscribed within the domain of the vulgar and over-exposed, it is useful to compare local *gay*-transvestite beauty contests with drag contests documented in Livingstone's (1991) film, *Paris is Burning*. The film is about drag balls in Harlem, New York City, which are attended and performed by African-American and Latino *gay* and/or transsexual/transgender men. Contestants dress up and compete under a variety of categories such as "executive", "Ivy League" or "glamour", and are judged on the basis of who can best approximate or pass as *real*. As Butler (1993:122-140) notes in her critique of the film, 'Gender is Burning', the contest at once *exposes* (her

term) the norms that regulate realness as a naturalized, that is to say contingent and constructed, set of practices, but also serves to re-inscribe and re-idealize the norm: the performers in effect affirming the *real* and reproducing their own degradation - not just as homosexuals but as ghettoized black/latinos - through their attempts to approximate and appropriate the *real*, a point reinforced by the film itself, which switches back and forth between ballroom drag scenes and shots of 'real' people moving in and out of expensive New York shops.

In a similar way one could argue that the transgenderal project expressed and articulated by many *gay/bantut*, amongst other places in the beauty contest, in particular, the attempt to embody the refined and transcend the vulgar, merely reaffirms their socially circumscribed position in the field of liminal sexuality and gender. However, *gay* strategies take place within a vastly different historical and social-cultural context which has important implications both for the process and the meaning of their performances. Whereas the audience, judges and performers in drag balls in Harlem are all normatively excluded persons (although each represent or becomes for the others the normatively real in various ways), *gay/bantut* beauty contest more directly confront and are confronted with the normal community. *Gay/bantut* performances are not just aimed at this audience, but are in a more unmediated way dependent upon their response as an index, and constitutive part of, their appropriation of the real. Moreover, the idea of persons being constituted in and through performance is much less problematic, less a revelation, than it is, or appears to be, in America.

In fact, it is in and through their jointly produced quality of realness that *gay/bantut* obtain a measure of success. Persons recognize, as they endow the *bantut* with, the power of self-transformation, of being able to appropriatively imitate and become that which they name. The sting, as it were, is that in a kind of double mimesis (Silverman 1992: cited in Weston 1993:353) which turns back on itself, the *bantut* not only become more Woman than women themselves (the reader may recall that respondents in the questionnaire-survey sometimes referred to the *gays* as 'like women, but even more so') but in the process become, as I have already suggested,

a different category altogether: an alter-identity defined in terms of American style and beauty. The point is that the normal community (to appropriate Butler's [1993] language) has a more immediate, if historically informed, stake in the production of beauty, than appears to be the case with the normal community in the drag balls of Harlem: the beauty contests, as with the parlours, functioning as the site within and through which the *bantut* are both collectively endowed as creative producers of beauty, masters of the imaginary and, at the same time, collectively circumscribed within the domain of *maarte* and the *over-exposed* - the domain of otherness without relation.

The audience, however, does not confront the *gay/bantut* as a singular entity, and it is important to further explore the different strategic positions and various interests at work in this process. Whilst men are as appreciative of *gay* talent at making beauty as women, their approach to the *bantut* is either, as is the case with older married men, to critically distance themselves (as is the case with their selection of the barber shop over the parlour) from what is regarded by them to be the failed masculinity of the *bantut*, or, as is especially the case with younger men, to approach them (as in their accounts of their relationship with *gays*) as tricksters and jokesters. This can be clearly mapped out around the beauty contests where older men will be found on the extreme peripheries of the audience viewing the proceedings from a disdainful distance, whilst younger men will either be found close up to the front in the audience or where possible hovering around the changing rooms making cat calls and other suggestive comments to the *bantut* whilst attempting to pinch, touch or fondle them as they go back and forth between the stage.

In fact, the relationship between young men and *gays* is complicated precisely because the *gay/bantut* represent such an immanent and familiar source of empowerment and desire. That is to say, whilst masculinity - the male body - is primarily identified with, and defined by, the defense of Islam, capturing American istyle (American style), as in *nagistyle-istyle* (styling), and in particular those aspect of American style associated with an aggressive macho sexuality are readily incorporated and as I have demonstrated, have become no less an important source for defining the masculine

body. Similarly whilst young Muslim men deny that they would ever have anal intercourse and deny any reciprocal emotional attachment or shared feelings with the *bantut*, what is never denied by young men is the pleasure they receive at the hands of the *bantut*. It is this admixture of affinity and desire coupled with the potential danger of being contaminated (*nalamin*) by the *bantut* - the danger not of being turned into a woman, but of being overexposed to / completely transformed by cultural otherness - which informs the trickster scenario played out by young men, a further expression, or "testing" and development, of their masculinity.

Amongst women, there is also this dual movement of celebration and circumscription, although it is structured and enforced in different ways. Women generally demonstrate a much greater affinity for the *gays*, which as I have suggested can be seen in *gay* life stories, who often cited the important influence of women in encouraging them either in childhood and/or during the "coming out" of their gayness. At beauty contests, not only is there usually a markedly higher proportion of older married women than older married men in attendance (with roughly equal numbers of young men/young women), but also women, especially wealthier, educated, professional women, are, apart from the *gays* themselves, usually amongst the major sponsors for such events and amongst the most vocal supporters of the "third sex".

One point of identification for women is the various and sometimes contradictory images of femininity which the *gays* purvey. In fact, the images of femininity purveyed in *gay* beauty contests have much in common with local women's beauty contests, school talent and fashion shows, not to mention graduation events and native modern style weddings. In this respect transvestite-*gay* beauty contests may be considered, in Garber's (1993:17) terms, "possibility spaces, structuring and confounding culture", an important site for trying out, experimenting with and reformulating various images of femininity.

However, there is also a clear point of identification with those aspects of *istyle* and *maarte*, including those aspects of *maarte* which border on the vulgar and sexually

illicit. According to many women and *gays*, a frequent topic of conversation amongst them pertains to sex, especially focused on *gay*-men experiences. Moreover, judging both by what women said and how they responded in the beauty contests, one of the things which women most anticipate in *gay* beauty contests is the ribald nature of the humour. *Gays* suggested that women liked to talk to them about sex, because they wanted to learn about different ways of having sex, and certainly one could suggest that just as *gays* in the beauty contest provide an important forum for trying out different versions of femininity, so too they provide a forum for fantasy and the formulation of erotic desire.

What I would suggest, however, is that *gay* sexuality, engendered as an expression of unproductive, un-gifted, unendowed women, "women as lovers but not as mothers" as the *gays* sometimes put it, represent the kind of absolute freedom which women imagine but are only ever able to express and experience themselves in tension with other equally strong intentionalities towards the reproduction and enhancement of familial and local identity. In supporting the "third-sex" and in drawing explicitly on sexual imagery, women are, in a double-edged manner, able to articulate this contradiction, vicariously participate in the freedom represented by *maarte*, and at the same time, clearly demarcate the boundaries of reproductive and unproductive feminine sexuality, which again are mapped onto / mapped out in terms of, *adat* and *istyle*, the local and abroad.

Gender and sexuality, however, are just one vector in the play of strategic relations and it is useful to indicate here the way in which other interests, simplistically mapped along the lines from the poor, undereducated, nonprofessional, non-elite, to the more affluent, educated, professional and/or political-economic elite, inform and/or provide alternate interpretive possibilities with respect to the *gays* and *gay/bantut* beauty contest. The elite, who figure prominently in beauty contests either as sponsors and/or as judges, etc, and whose names and positions are often read out several times throughout the contests, are a mirror image of the conceptual order of beauty signalled and indexed by the *gays* in the parlours and on the stage. In fact it is the strategic interests of these elite persons, who as the representatives, the

embodiments, of the state and state institutions, that is the Christian Philippine state, are, quite literally in some instances, the gate keepers of state funds and favours, through which the wealth, goods and images purveyed in these beauty contests (and women's beauty contests, school talent shows and weddings) flows, which more so than any other relation, creates and subverts the transformative mimesis at work in the beauty contests.

On the one hand, elite persons frequently upheld such performances by the "third-sex" as an example of a progressive and tolerant society, even whilst they basked in the reflected glory of their glamorous performances. As one councilwoman put it introducing a beauty contest, "*Gays* are now accepted throughout the world, and we should accept them as well. This contest is our way of saying we support the third-sex" (and see also Cannell 1991:376 who documents almost an identical expression of "support" for the *gays* in Bicol). On the other hand, however, the "third-sex" is often derided as ignorant- a view expressed, for instance, by the chairperson of the board of judges and headmistress of the school who laughed at the inability of the "uneducated" *bantut* to answer the questions she had set them in the beauty contest. Other things suggested about the *bantut* particularly by the educated elite was that they were "psychologically maladjusted", 'imbalanced', 'the product of failed upbringing'. At the same time, they were, as more generally, considered to be vulgar, indecent and "over-exposed".

There are two related but apparently contradictory moves being made here. Similar to what Butler (1993) argues is the case in *Paris is Burning*, in a move in which the *gays* collude, the elite as judges, both in the literal sense that they are actually the judges in the contest and in the figurative sense reflected in elite commentaries about *gay* ignorance, etc., are instantiated and naturalized as the source and arbiters of the real, the refined and the original, which in the process denies the *gays* the full potential of their performances. At the same time, they also suggest, along with others, that the *gay/bantut* have not just been exposed but over-exposed to, overwhelmed and completely transformed by cultural otherness. This move allows the elite to draw on and endow the *gay/bantut* as creative producers of *native modern*

style, transcend and negotiate their position as functionaries of the Christian Philippine state and stake their claims of being arbiters of local identity.

On each count, the *gay/bantut* are circumscribed in the domain of *maarte* and *overexposed*, whilst the elite claim to be, to possess, the real, the *simple*. More than that they are claiming ownership and possession over the *gays*, and over the transformative potential of the imaginary they represent. This does not mean however that either their possession of the *gays* or the space of the imaginary is complete or that their claims to the simple, to the real, remains uncontested, although it is not the *gays* themselves who actively challenge their position. Rather, it is the poor who continually call into question and challenge the cultural order of difference which the *gays* purvey on stage and which the wealthy claim to possess in practise.

Viewed from the perspective of the poor, the black humour of the *gay/bantut* beauty contest - that is the dual movement by which the *gays* are alternately celebrated and laughed, mocked and sometimes even forced to leave the stage - might be seen as embodying the tragic aspect of personal and community life; the frustration of unobtainable aspirations and desires [e.g wealth and glamour], and, one might add, the failure of state institutions to deliver education and true democracy, themes which are also enshrined in the ideology of beauty purveyed by the *bantut* and represented by the elite. However, there are other aspects to this.

More than anything else what the poor celebrate and call attention to in these contest is, like everyone else, precisely *maarte*, which on the one hand signals the potency and potential of appropriative transformation and on the other signals the *overexposed*, potency which in and of itself is outside of local transactional *remembrancing* relations. Moreover, unlike the elite, who sit in judgement upon and distinguish themselves from the vulgarity and overexposure of the *bantut*, the poor do not draw a distinction as such between the *gay/bantut* and members of the elite, particularly those sponsoring contest and/or sitting on the board of judges. Rather, the poor called attention to, and drew a homology between, both the *arte* of the elite and the *arte* of the *bantut*.

This circumscription of the politically dominant within the domain of the *arte* and the homology often drawn between them was most clearly demonstrated in the run up to the national and local elections in May 1992. In particular, an explicit link was often drawn between political campaigning and the *kursinada* scenario, in which for a period of time persons said became the *target* or *kursinada* of the politicians who attempted to win their votes through money or gifts. Just as young men represented their relations with *bantut* as being one in which they allowed the *bantut* to masturbate them in exchange for money or other goods, in a similar way, political campaigns were seen as a prime time for making money- *hikasin*: a time to be masturbated or fellated by as many of political-economic elite as possible who were, during election time at least, reduced to being *manupsup*, cock-suckers.

The point is not whether this constituted a genuine threat to the instrumental or economic power of the elite. Clearly it did not, nor was it meant to be. Rather, I would suggest that in drawing the homology between the political-economic elite and the *bantut* and circumscribing both within the domain of *maarte* and the "over-exposed", the poor are, on the one hand, contesting and drawing attention to the moves of the wealthy elite to naturalize difference and distinction within the terms of those state institutions, such as democracy, education, bureaucracy, which they see as largely ineffective and corrupt. On the other hand they are challenging and making claims on the higher status of the wealthy in terms of their failure to encompass them within a hierarchical relation.

That is to say what is being said to the wealthy is that whilst they may be potent and may have acquired the power of self transformation and may even be able to attract an audience, this does not in and of itself constitute a socially legitimate status. Nor is it, as I suggested in a previous chapter, simply seen as a matter of earning or obtaining social legitimacy through charity, but rather it is a matter of *remembrancing*, of sharing substance, of reciprocal recognition and the creation of social memory through ongoing gifting transactions. Indeed, status and legitimacy is always tentative, recognition is never fully surrendered, and what *maarte* calls attention to are persons' refusals not only to accept an un-inclusive distinction, but

also to accept naturalized hierarchy.

In short, the *arte* which the *bantut* create in the beauty contest and within which the powerful are circumscribed, belies the pathos of a situation in which power is at times seen as increasingly employed, and wealth increasingly accumulated, outside of the boundaries, and without respect either to the order of *adat* or *istyle*. In each case the poor are making claims upon those more powerful, more wealthy and of higher status than themselves in terms of human sociality, and the transactions through which human sociality is seen to be achieved: affirming their own, whilst leaving open the question and the possibility of the humanity of the other.

This takes us back, however, to the *gay/bantut*, embodiments of *maarte* tuud - *maarte* in the extreme, power without relation - for while the challenges, claims and appeals to human sociality are part of the ongoing contest for social recognition between persons who are variously and differentially located with respect to each other along the continuum from poor to wealthy within local communities, the *gay/bantut* are more generally and systematically excluded from and denied the possibility of realizing a socially accepted status or identity. Indeed, as I suggested from the very outset of the thesis, the paradoxical position of the *gay/bantut*, which structures the contradictory nature of *gay* experiences and *gay*'s expressed transgenderal project - the alternately celebratory and tragic - is that they have been constituted as the embodiment of a potent cultural otherness, within and for, but never completely accepted by, their own cultural community.

10.3 Summary and Conclusion(s) or There is nothing ambiguous about ambiguity.

I began the thesis with a critique of some of the various approaches which have been employed in the analysis of transvestism and transgendering, focusing my comments in the first instance on Peacock's (1968) ethnographic and symbolic analysis of transvestite performers in Indonesian *ludruk* theatres, and Garber's (1993) literary-critical account of transvestism in North American and Anglo-European cultural

traditions. Both of these approaches provided useful insights and challenges for thinking about transvestism as a kind of ritual "possibility space", a way of opening up and denaturalizing, as well as reinventing, re-imagining and reformulating cultural classifications and boundaries. However, in both of these cases transvestism was reduced to a universal psycho-sexual liminal space of fantasy and desire, which glossed over two fundamental points. The first is that transvestite metaphors may be variously figured in different historical and cultural situations, and second, that transvestites are neither simply textual figures, nor figures of pre-genital sexuality, but are historically constituted subjects.

To affirm the liminal, that is to say the transitional character of transvestites, or to go further and say that transvestites illuminates the performative or in Butler's (1990) terms ritual or "re-citational" and thus transformative potential of everyday cultural practice, is almost to state the obvious. The key question is to understand the way in which this liminal space of possibility - understood not as a separate transitional period but as the process of transformation itself - is culturally instituted, as Mary Douglas (1969) pointed out sometime ago in the contrast between the pig and pangolin in Hebrew and Lele cosmologies respectively.⁶

As I have demonstrated in the thesis, transformation may in fact be institutionalized in various ways and on different levels. For instance, the alternating masculinization and feminization of groups and individuals through marriage transactions takes place both through an affirmation, and the purposeful revealing, of ancestral unity and the denial of radical alterity or otherness, sexual or otherwise. Transformations which are ostensibly directed towards mutual encompassment and the diminishment of difference: transvestite performers on these occasions metaphors of *sumbang* (the incestuous sibling pair) which in this context figures as both the ground and goal of social action (Errington 1987).

However, more differentiating forms of hierarchial transformation have been historically instituted and enacted through the recognition and appropriation of things and persons which come from the outside. In the traditional polity, which grew out

of, as it was reproduced by, the continual appropriation of slaves, etc., transformation proceeded through a process of absorption and encompassment, marked amongst other things by the movement of things and persons through commoditized and into gifting relations. In this situation alterity was recognized, but only along (conceptually, if not always geographically) the periphery, the centre premised on, and directed towards, the reproduction of the same social fiction of hierarchical encompassment and unity signalled in marriage transactions, although internally differentiated and institutionalized in the Sultanate according to different degrees of supernatural blessing and grace (*barakat*). Thus, while to my knowledge at least, transvestites were never entrusted as guardians of the royal regalia in Sulu as they were in Sulawesi, the mythical unity which they represented did perhaps in some way mirror the position of the sultan as the apical figure of hierarchal encompassment within the polity.

The events of the last century, however, and in particular, the collapse and dissolution of the once incorporative polity, the attempt to forcibly integrate the local populace into the Philippine State, and most recently the destruction of the town of Jolo and imposition of Christian Filipino Military rule have led to, at the very least, a partial refiguring both of the process of appropriative transformation and of the *gay/bantut*. Transformation still proceeds through a process of incorporation and absorption marked by the movement of things and persons into hierarchically encompassed/encompassing *remembrancing* relations. Moreover, transformative appropriation is still an index, as it is still constitutive of, potency. Indeed, the *gay/bantut* are mirror images of, even as they actively contribute to, the potent presence of the present day economic and political elite.

However, it is no longer simply a recognition of otherness, as a first step towards encompassment and appropriation, but also, at the same time, a more radical move both to create and keep otherness at a distance which is part of the order of the day. That is to say, identity is becoming less a matter of incorporation and more a matter of distinction, opposition and duality, and it is this process of total transformation that is embodied, and revealed by, the *gay/bantut*. Thus, it is no coincidence the

emergence and valorization of the *gay/bantut* coincides with the politicization of Islamic identity, including the MNLF's invention of the concept *bangsa moro / bangsa muslim* (the *moro* people) to construct an encompassing ethnic identity, which has valorized and demonized the *Bisaya*' (Christian Filipino) in the same way that local Muslim persons have been demonized in the popular imagining of the Christian Philippine state. It is this same process which has led to the valorization of masculinity and femininity and the abjection of the *gay/bantut* as a 'third sex': an alterity insisted upon, by their engenderment as impotent men and defiled women and by their circumscription within commodified relations.

The point is that there is nothing ambiguous about ambiguity, sexual or otherwise, rather it is the specific product or effect of different historical relations of power and resistance through which cultural subjects are created and re-create themselves. This, in turn, relates to the second point, which is that any consideration of transvestism must take into account the projects and social trajectories of transvestites themselves (Whitehead 1981): projects and strategies that are no less culturally constituted, if no more singular or complete, than the normative order within or against which they are directed (Butler 1990, 1993). On the one hand, as I have suggested, social mobility and prestige is one part of *gay*'s transgenderal projects and attempts to gain social acceptance, although they do so in the very terms - femininity, education, professional occupation, fame, glamour, in short, beauty and America - through which they have been circumscribed as the *over-exposed*. On the other hand, however, as I have also suggested, they celebrate the potency with which they are endowed and circumscribed as the purveyors of beauty and *istyle*, and use the power which it brings - both economic and erotic - as a means of obtaining and negotiating their pleasures.

In summary I suggest that one can only begin to outline a more general theory of transvestism and transgendering through the analysis of ethnographically grounded and historically specific studies. In particular I have argued in the thesis that transvestism and transvestite effects, are not as Garber (1993) would have it the fount of cultural transformation. Rather, what this study has suggested is that transvestites and transvestite performances may usefully reveal certain aspects of the way in which

the liminal, that is to say the transitional and transformational, are themselves culturally engendered. Thus, if transvestites and transvestite performances are a site for contesting and reformulating social classifications - a "possibility space" - what is being contested and negotiated is the meaning and process of cultural transformation itself.

Endnotes.

1. In fact this figure should probably be reduced as informant estimates often include young boys who might otherwise be considered *bantut-bantut*. Thus, for instance, 500 out of a male population of 25,000 over the age of 7 would give a figure of 2%.
2. Eduardo Ugarte (1992) has recently provided an insightful analysis of the political background to the colonial fascination with *juramentado* and *amuck* (the colonial glosses of *parrang sabbil*), although he does not himself add anything in the way of attempting to understand the particular cultural logic of *parrang sabbil*.
3. Ewing (1955) suggested that the erect penis was a magical means of ensuring the warrior would not fall in battle, but leaves it at that. Winzeler (1992:122n) unconvincingly, I think, suggests that the penis might have been bound to prevent any discharge of bodily substances after death which would defile the ritually clean corpse.
4. The interpretation of transvestite contests as ritual performances grows both out of my reading of anthropological literature on ritual, particularly more recent efforts which have stressed the processual over the static (see in addition to those cited in the text, Schieffelin 1976, 1985; Tambiah 1985) and in discussions with, and through the writing of, other doctoral students working on ritual processes in the UCL department of anthropology, particularly Nicholas Argenti and Desmond Mallikarachi.
5. I never actually saw an "indiscrete" genital, although I was told about this happening to a *gay* performer at a beauty contest, and its truth or falsity simply highlights the desire for it.
6. In part I take my cue here from Kapferer's (1987:161-164) critique of Turner's notion of liminality. Kapferer suggests that *communitas* (an assertion of the underlying, natural oneness of humanity, another kind of pre-genital state) which is said to characterize the "in-between" period of social transformation is actually the product of the specific ideological orientation of modern states and industrial societies. This also relates to Napier's (1986) arguments in *Masks, Transformation and Paradox* about the transformation of the notion of the self (and the transformations of the self or person) in 'western' cultural traditions (cf. also Dumont 1986). Specifically Napier argues one moves from a situation in classical antiquity in which transformation or metamorphosis was seen, for instance, by Aristotle as an integral part of self development and an extension of masking and dramatic persona, to a situation beginning with Augustine in which external transformation was seen as at best suspect and at worst demonic, all of which affirmed a spiritual self (equal before God) separate from social persona. Although no one has, to my knowledge, fully explored this, it would seem that there would be much scope for a Foucaultian genealogy of transvestism / transgendering along these lines.



Figure 10.1 and 10.2 Contestants in the *Mutya ng Bayan* women's beauty contest. (Above) in *native modern style* and (below) in casual attire.



Appendices

Appendix A: Key text transcript from discussions on 'sumbang' (incest) and 'pahalal kawin' (marriage ritual).

I include here a transcription of a tape recorded conversation which encapsulates some of the pivotal ideas surrounding *sumbang* and *pahalal kawin* on which I have drawn for my analysis. This text was the result of discussion with a Tausug *pakil* (minor religious official) and *Bapa'* Kim Sing, the local barangay councilor and head of the household where I was staying on the subject. Their discussion beginning with Kim Sing was as follows

K.S. Katan usug iban babai magtaymanghud ini. Awn hadja lawang kasumbang magtaymanghud. Angkan na subay lawagun nila bang biya'diin di' kasumbang.

All men and women are brothers and sisters. There are only doors of incestuous relations between brothers and sisters. That's why they have to look at how they can avoid incest.

Pakil's response. *Pahalal ha pakil. Angkan da di' ma awn in lawang hikasumbang sin usug iban babai. Sin awal, magtaymanghud katan gimuwa dayn ha nabi Adam. Angkan da bang usug sung na mag kawin, igun in pagtaymanghud. Igun in pagkasumbang. Amu in laung niya, sugsugan magpasaksi'un sin Tuhan iban pakil, amu sugsugan hipahalal kawin. Hati niya in usug magasawa na, babai magbana na. Hati na halal na sila kaduwa. Igun na in kasumbang. Duun ha pagkawin.*

They make it lawful/sanctified through the pakil. (halal kawin) That's why the door of incest does not come to be part of the man and the woman. From time immemorial everyone that was born were siblings who came out of the prophet Adam. That's why when a man will soon get married, he removes the sibling relation. He gets rid of that which would cause him to commit incest. That's what they say, joined together to be witnessed by God and the priest, the sanctified relation of marriage which binds them together. It means that the man will take a wife now, that the woman will take a husband. It means they are both ritually sanctified. The incestuous relation has been removed, there at the marriage ceremony.

Angkan da bang di' magkawin, magburus in babai awn halam biyarat and biyarat in anak nila. Biyarat bang way pa sila nakatiyaun ampa naburus in babai. Halam biyarat di' kaingatan bang isiyu in ama'. Dayn da haram sin maas niya, maawn in amu in laung niya hikasumbang.

That's why if [a couple] does not get married, and they have intercourse such that the woman gets pregnant, their children will be called either *halam biyarat* (bastard child of incestuous relationship father not known) and *biyarat* (child of incestuous relation father known). From the unlawful marriage of its parents came to be that which is called incest.

Angkan da amu in maas han sipak, amu usba iban waris sappantun anak ku ini. Mangaiyu aku madtu pa ina/ama sin babai mangaiu' aku wali. They say, ok, kiyaungsuran mu na mahal iban basingan (gold) iungsud ku isab kaymu mapahalal in manga bata yan, pahalalan in kawin. Iyungsud ku na kaymu. Laung ku, marayaw na, iyungsud ku na pa pakil. Yadtu ha pakil, laung ku, tuan pakil ungsud ku in anak ku iban anak- piyangnganan in anak. Yari na in wakil niya, hipahalal in anak niya iban anak ku. Saksi na in kamu katan, labi labi in manga malaikat. Ubus sugsugan sin ini pakil. Laung sin usug taymahun ku in kawin hikahallal kaku iban sin mural na sabbut halal asawa ku. Ubus yadtu kiyasaksian sin katan, sampay manga malaikat bukun sila in sumbang.

Thats why the elders of the other group, the *usba* (fathers elders/relations) and *waris* (mothers elders/relations), take for example my son here. I go to the mother and father of the girl and ask their permission for marriage (*wali*). They say, okay, you have given the bridewealth (*maal iban basingan*), I give her over to you so that the children there can be lawfully married. I give [them] over to you. So I say, thats good, I will turn them over to the *pakil*. There at the *pakil*, I say, *tuan pakil*, I turn over [to you] this child of mine and the child of such and such. Here is (the bride's father's) representative, so that my child and his might be made lawful/sanctified. All of you witness, even more so you angels. Then they are joined together by the *pakil* here. The man says, I accept this ceremony which has sanctified me and also my wife. After that it has now been witnessed by all present even the angels that they are not in an incestuous relationship.

Appendix B. Life History Interviews: Structure and Methodology.

The life-history data are the product of semi-formal / structured taped interviews with *gay/bantut* which I conducted over the course of my field work. As noted in the thesis, many of these interviews were conducted with *gays* with whom I ongoing contact, so that in this way I was often able to compare various versions, and get different glosses, on things which they related in these more formal interviews. The interviews themselves were held in a variety of setting, in the backroom of beauty parlours on quiet afternoons, in persons homes, in offices and at college. Most of the interviews were conducted in Tausug, some but not all of which I later transcribed into English, although on two occasions, the interviews were, at the *gays* request, in English.

The following is a schedule of questions which I formulated in the field after I decided to concentrate my attention on the *gay/bantut*, and after I already had some knowledge about *gays*. My intention was (apart from the basic biographical data which I systematically collected) to use the questions as a means to prompt the *gays* to talk about various aspects of their lives, rather than as a set schedule of questions to be answered. In fact, looking back at some of the interviews, I now feel that many of the questions on the schedule not only probably appeared naive to the *gays*, but also on some occasions sometimes prevented me from being more attuned to what I was hearing and from asking more probing questions. On the other hand, the list of questions does not really convey an accurate picture of the dynamics of the actual interview process, and most *gays* had their own ideas about what I ought to know about them.

-Biographical details:

- Age
- Number of siblings/relations
- Parents (divorced/seperated/together)
- Number of partners each parent has had.
- Any other *gays*/tomboys in your family?
- Father/Mothers occupation?
- Ethnic affiliation?
- Originally from where?
- Why moved to Jolo?
- Religion? Regular attend/pray in mosque/church?
- Education?
- Occupation?
- If student, who supports your studies?
- Living where and with whom?
- Who pays for your food where you live?
- Do you support anyone else (family/boyfriends) financially?

Life-history questions:

- For you what does it mean to be gay?
- When and how did you first realize you were gay?
- Can you tell me about your childhood experiences:
 - How did your parents/brother/sisters treat you?
 - Did they encourage/discourage you in any way?
 - Did they ever physically punish you because you were acting like a bantut?
 - How did you know/show that you were a gay at that age?
 - What was your experience like in elementary school?
 - If you wore girl's clothing as a child, did this continue into elementary school?
- Can you tell me about your teenage/high school experiences:
 - Who did you spend most of your time with?
 - Did you dress/act like a gay?
 - Did you ever try and hide your gayness?
 - Were you ever teased?
 - Were you ever verbally/physically abused/punished at this age?
 - How did teachers react to you?
- About sexual experiences:
 - What was (and at what age) was your first sexual encounter?
 - Have you ever had or desired sexual relations with women?
 - Have you ever had or desired sexual relations with another gay?
 - What about masturbation? Mutual masturbation?
 - Do you think this is an accepted activity for boys/men?
 - Have you ever watched X-rated movies and if so what kind?
 - Have you ever paid for someone to give you sexual service?
 - What kind of sexual activity brings/gives you the most satisfaction?
- About lovers/relationships:
 - Have you ever been in love?
 - When was your first love?
 - What kind of relationships have you been involved in?
 - How many different relationships have you had?
 - Do you support your partner in the relationship or does she reciprocate?
 - How important is sexual activity in your relationships?

-About dressing/acting like a woman?

-Do you ever/how often do you wear make up, women's clothing, jewelry, etc. Why or Why not?

-Do you work hard at your body movements and speech to make they like a womans or are your movements completely natural?

-Do you act this way when no one else is around?

-On your chosen occupation:

-Why do you choose to do this work?

-Why are you studying for ____?

-Do you feel there are any occupations for which you are not suited?

-What would you like to do more than anything else?

-Have you ever spent time abroad?

-Would you like to go/work abroad?

-On Friends/Companions?

-Are most of your friends older/younger, men/women/gays?

-With whom do you spend most of your time?

-Doing what, where, why?

-Other Questions:

-Have you ever participated in a Miss Gay Competition?

-How many times? Where? Why/Why not?

-Are miss Gay contests taken seriously or are they just for fun?

-Do you belong to a gay association?

-Have you ever been involved in politics?

-How do you think *gays* are treated in society?

-If you were to be reborn, would you come back as a man or a woman?

Appendix C: Survey-Questionnaire on Personal Consumption: Structure and Methodology.

Although I have drawn extensively from the formal survey on personal consumption practises in Chapter 9, it arises out of more general discussions about consumption and style. The interviews were conducted both by myself and by advanced students undertaking social work degrees at the Notre Dame de Jolo. I monitored their first few interviews and then let them continue on their own. Interviews were conducted in various parts of the town of Jolo, in shops, clinics, college, etc, but always in public arenas, as part of the questions were concerned with the clothing the person was actually wearing at the time. Two-hundred and forty-four respondents were interviewed, stratified according to gender, age and ethnic-religious affiliation.

The following is the English translation of the questions asked on the actual interview form which I include below.

Questions about some of the things you buy:

A. Biographical Data:

1. Sex
2. Age
3. Marital Status
4. Ethnic
5. Religion
6. Where do you live?
7. Where were you born?
8. What level of school have you finished?
9. What is your mother's occupation?
10. What is your father's occupation?
11. What is your occupation?
12. What is your spouses occupation?
13. What is your income (interviewers were told to ask for estimated monthly earnings.)
14. From where do you get your spending money?
- (15. blank)
16. Have you ever worked abroad?
17. Where did you work abroad?
18. What did you do there?
19. What kinds of things did you buy there just for yourself?
20. Did you send money back?
21. Approximately how much within one month?
22. What kinds of things did you bring back with you as *pasalubong* (welcoming gifts)?
23. Do you have any close relatives working abroad?

Men or Women?

24. Where are they working?
25. What is their occupation?
26. Are they sending money back home?
27. If so, how much?
28. Have you been given a pasalubong?
29. If so, what was it?

B. About the clothes you wear.

1. Are most of your clothes; 1) store bought 2) tailored 3) self-made 4) given to you?
2. How much do you spend on clothing a month; 1) 50 pesos 2) 100+ 3) 500+ 4) 1000+?
3. Most of the time where do you buy your clothes; 1) Jolo 2) Zamboanga 3) Cebu/Manila 4) other.
4. How often do you buy clothing at the following places:

Department Store; Frequently	Never	Seldom	Sometimes
Barter Trade; Frequently	Never	Seldom	Sometimes
Market Stalls; Frequently	Never	Seldom	Sometimes
Sidewalk Vendors; Frequently	Never	Seldom	Sometimes
<i>Juwal Murah</i> *; Frequently	Never	Seldom	Sometimes
On Credit; Frequently	Never	Seldom	Sometimes

(**Juwal Murah*, from Malay, meaning things sold for cheap.)

5. Most of the time what particular store do you shop at?
6. What is the most important thing when you buy clothing?
7. Out of the following list of words, how would you rank them in order of importance?
8. Do you ever have clothes tailored?
9. When was the last time?
10. What did you have tailored?
11. How much did it cost you?
12. Where did you have it tailored; 1) Jolo 2) Zamboanga 3) Cebu/Manila
4) Other.
13. Who designed the clothing; 1) Yourself 2) Tailor 3) Friend/relative?
14. Where did you/they get the design idea? 1) themselves 2) Fashion

magazine/book 3)Other

15. How would you describe the dress of a beautiful woman?
16. How would you describe the dress of a beautiful man?
17. What do you imitate in choosing your clothing; 1) Cine/artista 2) Magazine
(interviewer to fill in what kind)_____ 3) Companions style.
4.Other__
18. If you were to choose from the following list of words, which term best describes how you want your clothes to be:

1) Simple	4)Class	7)Style
2) Modern	5)Original	8)Professional
3) Religus	6)Style kamaasan	9)Arti
19. The clothes you are wearing now, are they the kind of clothing you would wear out on an everyday basis:

Interviewer to fill in description of clothing with interviewee as per table on interview sheet (see interview schedule part B; categories already in English).

C. Questions about Gold jewellery.

1. Do you buy gold frequently?
2. The gold you buy is it for yourself or for someone else?
3. Where do you buy your gold; 1)Jolo 2)Zamboanga 3)Cebu/Manila
4.Abroad?
4. Why do you buy gold?
5. Have you ever been given gold as a remembrance or as a heirloom?
6. Do you ever pawn your gold?
7. Why do you pawn your gold?
8. Approximately how many times in a year do you pawn your gold;
1)once or twice 2)four times 3)six times 4)every month?
9. Do you redeem your gold?
10. Have you ever lost gold because you failed to redeem it?
11. Do you ever pawn clothing, watches, or other home goods/utensils?
12. Do you ever pawn remembrances or heirlooms?

D. Questions about who cuts your hair and does your make up:
(see questionnaire-table)

1. Why do you think there are more bantut cutting hair and doing make up than either women or men?
2. What do you have to say about the bantut?
3. Why are the numbers of bantut increasing at present?
4. Do you get angry / hostile with the bantut?

E. Questions about other things:

1. Do you use perfumes or other beauty products?
2. If so what, purchased/given, where from, why do you use the products?
3. Do you smoke; 1)Never 2)Frequently 3)Sometimes 4)Rarely
4. How many packs do you finish in a week?
1)one 2)two-three 3)seven 4)more than seven packs a week.
5. What is your cigarette: 1)no preference 2)_____
6. Why do you choose this brand?
7. Do you buy blue seal 1)yes 2)no
8. Why?
9. What is the most important thing in buying cigarettes;
1) cost 2) flavour 3)style 4)Quality?
10. Where do you buy your cigarettes; 1)Jolo 2)Zamboanga 3)Cebu/Manila
4)Abroad?
11. If the election wasn't on, would you carry a handgun;
If so, is it; given/bought; where from; local/imported; how much; why do you wear it?
12. In your opinion, what is the most important thing (second, third, fourth) to buy out of the following list;

Gold; Clothes; Watch; Rayban; Appliances; Handgun; Antiques.
13. If you were given 10,000 pesos just for yourself, what would you buy?

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PANGASUBU PASALAN HA MANGA PIYAMI-MI MU:

(skip 15)

A. Biographical Data:

1. Sex <u>Male</u>	16. Nakahinang na kaw ha abroad?
2. Pila na in umul mu? <u>20</u>	17. Hain kaw nakahinang?
3. Toga asawa/bana <u>Way</u>	18. Unu in hinang mu didtu?
4. Banesa (Ethnic group) <u>Tausog</u>	19. Unu in bini mu didtu para ha baran-baran mu sadja?
5. Agama <u>Islam</u>	20. Nakapara kaw sin? Menga pila sin ha lawm hangka tahun?
6. Hain kaw naghula? <u>Kasubutan</u>	22. Unu in manga pasalubong diya mu mari?
7. Hain kaw piyaganak? <u>Manobo</u>	23. Awa tahasiya' mu nakahinang ha abroad? (Babai atawa Usug) <u>awm</u>
8. Unu in natalus mu ha iskul? <u>College level</u> <small>1. Elementary 2. High School 3. College Grad.</small>	24. Hain siya nakahinang? <u>Jeddah K.S.A</u>
9. Usaha sin ina' <u>Teacher</u>	25. Unu in hinang niya didtu? <u>Doctor</u>
10. Usaha sin Ama' <u>Business man</u>	26. Nakapara siya sin? Menga pila sin ha lawm hangka tahun? <u>50,000</u>
11. Unu in usaha mu?	28. Kiyanihan kaw pasalubong? <u>skate</u>
12. Unu in usaha sin asawa mu?	29. Unu yadtu? <u>pan-fu</u> <u>shifu</u>
13. Income	
14. Iiyu n. nagbuhay kaymu	
15. Para ha pami-mi mu? <u>pan-fu</u>	

B. Pangasubu pasalun pagtamung mu:

1. In kamatauan tamungun mu? (circle one)	1. Eini?	2. Piyatahi?	3. Nahinang mu?	4. Piyagbuhel
2. Pila in kagastu' mu hipagbi mu tamungun ha lawm hangka bulan?	1. 50.00	2. 200.00 +	3. 500.00	4. 1000+
3. Ha kamawmahan, hain bini mu in tamungun mu?	1. Jolo	2. Zamboanga (sometimes)	3. Cebu/Marila	4. Other
4. Mami kaw tamungun ha----				
Department Store	1. Di'	2. Mahang	3. Masuhul	4. Mararan
Barter Trade	1. Di'	2. Mahang	3. Masuhul	4. Mararan
Market Stalls	1. Di'	2. Mahang	3. Masuhul	4. Mararan
Sidewalk Vendor	1. Di'	2. Mahang	3. Masuhul	4. Mararan
kuwal Murah	1. Di'	2. Mahang	3. Masuhul	4. Mararan
Utang ha Tau	1. Di'	2. Mahang	3. Masuhul	4. Mararan
5. Ha kamawmahan, ha'umu tinda kaw nagbi tamungun? <u>Plaza Maima</u>				
6. Unu in mas importantu bang kaw magpi' tamungun?				
7. Muna muna unu in mas importantu ha listahan mu? Unu in ikaduwa, ikatelu?	3 Pila Sin	2 Isyle		
	Imported	Original		
	1 Quality	Brand		

8. Magpatali kaw tamungun?
(If no continue to next sec.)
9. Ka'na yoda magpatali' kaw
tamungun? (If in occasion)
10. Unu in piyatehi' mu?
11. Pila an kayala mu?
12. Ha'in piyatehi' mu?
13. Isyu in nagdesign sin badi?
14. Ha'in nakawa in design
15. Biya' diin in tamungun sin babai
malingkat tuud?
16. Biya' diin in tamungun
sin usug malingkat tuud?
17. Unu in singuran mu para sin
pagtamung mu?
18. Bang ikaw in papihun unu in
kabaya'an mu para ha pagtamung
mu? (circle one)
19. In tamungun mu ini, biya' da pagusalan mu ha pagtamungun mu adlaw-adlaw?

20.

Item	Description/ Brand	Bought/ Given by whom?	Bought where/ From where?	How much?	Why bought/ chosen?
Shirt/Blouse Dress	Violot polo shirt (Hanes)	ako	So lo	₱ 100 +	I like the color
Pants/Skirt	Maong, faded Levi's	ako	So lo	₱ 600 +	Durable & stylish
Shoes	White, rubber NIKE®	Barfala (uncle)	Manila	₱ 2000 +	Durable
Watch					
Jewelries					
Other:	Ray ban	ako	Zambo	₱ 1,200	Original/imported

c. Pangeranbu paselan belawan itu

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Maraman kaw manu bulawan? | 2. In bulawan yadu pere kayman? |
| 3. Manu na nana minge kayman? | 4. In bulawan yadu pere kayman? |
| 4. Maraman kaw manu bulawan? | 5. Kayman na kaw manu minge? |
| 6. Hisanda mu isab in minge bulawan mu? | 7. Maraman na isab in bulawan mu? |
| 8. Nakapila kaw nagsanda ha lawm hangka tahun? | 9. Palukatur mu isab in bulawan mu? |
| 10. Magsanda isab kaw, hadju', lillus atawa dugang kapanayapan? | 11. Magsanda isab kaw, panununan atawa pusaka? |

D. Pangasubu pasalan in naggunting/nagmakeup kaymu?

Service	Hain? (where?) 1. Barbero 2. Parlour 3. Home Service- (Barout) 4. Other.	Nakapila ha lawm hangka bulan? How many times a month?	Pila kayatayad mu? How much do you pay?	Mayta' mu naka' service ha _____ Why do you get service here?
Misapagaram Hair cut	Parlor	2	free	free
Misapsmeritux Manicure				
Misapmakent Hairstyle Makeup/Hair				
Special event e.g. wedding graduation.				

2. Mayia' mas maulud in manga
bantu nagguguring/nagmamaka
us diang sin babai iban usug? *Mainga
pan tal mag-
is tayl*
3. Uru in mabayla' mu pasal sin
manga bantu? *No Comment*
4. Mayia' isab taulud in manga
bantu bihaun? *Magka-
ka kati (influenced)*
5. Madughai kaw ha manga
bantu? *Da'*

E. Pangasubu pasalan in daginis kapanyapan:

1. Magusul kaw perfume, borek atawa manga dugaing health care/ beauty products?	Unu yan	Eini/Dihal	Daing ha' unu	Mayta' mu nausal
	Perfume (poison)	Pihil Bm	Saundi	long last fragrance

2. Magunzo kaw? 1. Di 2. Marman 3. Masuhul 4. Mahang
3. Pilangka kaha' maubus mu ha 1. Hambuuk 2. Lusa 3. Fnu 4. Labi pitu

4. lawa hangka pitu?

4. Unu in Siga mu?

1. Way Bidda'

Marlboro

5. Mayta' mu napa in siga mu?

"Manly" pang-uoq

6. Mami kaw "blue seal"?

1. Huun

2. Di

7. Mayta' kaw nagsiga blue seal?

Bukon Mahara f

8. Unu in mas importanti ha pagpi'han mu in siga?

1. Pila Sin

2. Naram

3. "Istyle"

4. "Quality"

9. Hain kaw mami siga?

1. Jolo

2. Zamboanga

3. Cebu/Manila

4. Abroad

	Piyagihil/biri?	Daing ha' unu?	Local/imported	Pila kiyabi mu?	Mayta' kaw magda?
10. Bang way eleksyon magda kaw handgun?	father's	1 gasan partikul	Imported		for defense

11. Magkadu kaw pa: Do you ever go to:	Unu in agaran? How do you travel?	Hain kaw nagistay? Where do you stay?	Bang ha dugaing hula' yan magkadu kaw pa/ Do you ever go to?	Unu in bihun mu didu? What kinds of things do you buy?
-Zamboanga -Cebu -Manila	-Lansa boat -Kapal ship -Plane	-Bagay/kampung -Lodgin house -Hotel	-Disco/nightclub -Restaurant -Shopping Centers	Way bidda' na

12. Para kaymu, ha baran mu sadja, muna-muna unu in mas importanti sin manga kapanayapan, amu in nalista ha baba mi. Unu in ikaduwa, ikatu, ikaupat...

Bulawan	3
Badiu'	2
Lillus	1
Rayban	6
Appliances	5
Handgun	4
Antiques	7

13. Bang kaw kiyaditlan hangpu'ingbu pesos para ha baran-baran mu hadja, unu in bihun mu?

Travel fox (cheese), pen, etc.

Appendix D: Social profile of respondents to personal consumption survey and a further note about class, status and heirarchy in Sulu.

As I noted in the text I found that reported expenditure on clothing provided the most consistent way to group respondents in terms of local socio-economic position. This is not to say that the estimated expenditure on clothing provides a precise measure of the actual amounts persons are spending on clothing in a given month (as these figures were arbitrarily set by myself). Rather what it does reflect is how persons placed themselves along a continuum from poor to wealthy in terms of consumption practises and which broadly correlates with other factors of social class and income as the summary of each expenditure group below bears out.

1000+.	7% (17 of 240) respondents.
Mean Age.	32
Gender.	29% (5) Women, 65% (11) Men, 6% (1) Gay.
Education.	70% (12/17) reporting some college and most with a college diploma, incl. 2 cont. students.
Occupation.	70% (12) *"professionals" (2 women, 10 men). 18% (3) of the respondents were students (2 college/1 H.S.) supported by parents, one or more of whom would be classified as "professional". 12% (2) non-professionals- (asst in husband's photoshop, cargo dispatcher)
Est. Income.	5400 pesos per month, range between 2300-12000, median 3915ppm. (59% (10) reporting)

*Professionals refers to what is locally recognized to be "professional" occupations, incl. Teachers, medical professionals, military personel usually at an officer level, managers, engineer.

500+. **33% (79 of 240) respondents.**

Mean Age. 27

Gender. 53% (42) Women, 43% (34) Men, 4% (3) Gay.

Education. 72% reporting some college education, incl 13 continuing students.

Occupation. 39% Professional, of which 66% (19) are women.

 19% Students.

 18% Classified themselves as unemployed/standby, of which half have some college level education.

 15% Business, inc. beautician, avon, etc.

 6% Small time vendor, labourer.

 3% At home.

Est. Income. 3200ppm, range 800-8000, median 2400. (38% reporting)

100+. **51% (122 of 240) respondents.**

Mean Age. 29.

Gender. 45% (54) Women, 49% (59) Men, 6%(8) Gay.

Education. 60% reporting some college level education, inc @ 30 students.

Occupation. 29% Labourers, small time vendors, waitress.

 24% H.S./College students still studying.

 21% Unemployed, of which 80% have some college.

 16% Professional, of which 32% (6/19) are women.

Avg. Income. 2000, range 500-4500 per month, median 1800. 38% reporting.

50+.	9% (22 of 240) of all respondents.
Mean Age.	38.
Gender.	55% (12) Women, 45% (10) Men.
Education.	14% (3) reporting some college, incl 2 student.
Occupation.	59% Small store keepers, vendors, market traders. 32% Unemployed, (1/6 college ed). 9% Students. 0% Professional
Avg. Income.	1120 ppm., range 200 - 2000, med. 1000. (47% reporting.)

Further notes on Class, Status, Consumption and Hierarchy in Sulu.

It is now commonly accepted that to locate "taste", to understand "istyle" it is necessary to view it as informing as it is informed by the dispositions engendered in the particular habitus of particular groups of persons within a society (Bourdieu 1984). What Bourdieu has usefully problematized and to some extent rendered an account of is the way in which those categories such as gender, class, status, together with what is often considered to be more ephemeral issues such as taste, consumption preference, etc, emerges together in certain relationships, and which together form the precondition for their own reproduction.

This must be a primary starting point for any analysis of consumption or *istyle* (style). It is complicated first in as much as while it grounds taste in *habitus*, its sociological categories to some extent not only remain static but also reflect certain orientations to the world. In the Philippines, one must ask and problematize, as Errington (1989;1990) has inquired of the royal houses of Sulawesi and gender in Southeast Asia, the extent to which western sociological categories (and there underlying assumptions about power and the economizing individual) allow for such a rendering of disposition and taste, and whether or not it is necessary to understand the *habitus*, the spatial economic dimensions of dispositions, in relation to local understandings, classifications and practises of power.

Kerkvliet (1991: Chapter 1, esp. 59-63) has recently suggested, following Weber (1946) and Giddens (1982), that in the Lowland Philippines, a persons social position may be thought about relative to two seperate factors, class and status: class refering to how persons are stratified according to production and property and status refering to how persons are stratified according to their style of life and consumption of goods. Arguing that this to a certain extent reflects local discourse, persons are

categorized along one axis according to wealth; how the poor (*mga mahihirap*) are distinguished from the rich (*mga mayayaman*) in terms of 'standard of living', while along another axis persons are categorized according to class, or how they make their living (*hanapbuhay*) relative to the relations of production.

A similar distinction could be drawn in Sulu where on the one hand persons talk about their relative standing of poverty and wealth including various recognized gradations from the destitute (*miskin di' makaabut*, the poor who cannot reach or attain their daily necessities) to the rich (*dayahan*), such as foriegners and the wealthy elite who are able to reach what ever it is they desire. On the other hand persons are similarly classified and classify themselves on the basis of how they obtain their living (*kabuhianan*) categorized to a certain extent on the relations of production, from the wage-labourer (*naglilibur*) to the capitalist (*kapitalista*).

It is necessary, however, to refine this reading in terms of the local situation. The most obvious point is that within the town of Jolo, one is not directly dealing with relations of agricultural production, nor on the other hand, however, can one to any great extent speak of any sizeable urban proletariat. Rather the local economy is divided into three or perhaps four primary sectors, divided into two main branches. The first and by far the most important is what in local parlance is often termed "business". Reflecting the longer history of the town of Jolo as a central market place this involves everything from local merchant capitalist to petty traders to pearl divers/fishers and the myriad *suki'/palilitu'* (client/customer-financier/merchant) relations which to some extent define one's position in what is for most persons an ever changing market place.

Interrelated with these businesses, and not clearly distinguished as such in local parlance, is what might be called the service sector. This would include everything from the few department type stores in town, the several beauty parlours, video houses and pawnshops to the ubiquitous coffeeshops (*kadai*) and general merchandising establishments. In a fairly straightforward fashion the relations of production are characterized here by the division on the one hand between owner/managers and employees, which with the exception of beauticians, whom as I noted (Chapter 8) split their earnings with parlour owners, are usually paid on a monthly wage basis.

Finally there is what might be described as domestic economies including clusters of essentially peasant fisher households, which are in some instances supplemented by small craft production such as mat weaving, or homebased vending (*magdagang-dagang*) as well as those households whose primary source of income may be "business" but who supplement their income similarly by a variety of other means, including video showings, video games as well as small time vending.

The other major economic sector reflecting the town of Jolo's position in Sulu's economy as the gateway to state resources, are what following local terms I call "professionals". This is divided between three main areas, government and civil service employees, educational professions and medical professionals, with others

such as lawyers and architects, being a very small minority. Running across each of these levels is the divide between upper level professionals, including the various academic supervisors, managers and medical professionals (i.e. doctors) as opposed to clerks, nurses and teachers who make up the bulk of the professional ranks.

More importantly, however, than the differences between village based agricultural production which Kerkvliet (1991) describes and a semi-urban beaurcratic and trading center is the local model and understanding of social stratification, which are organized around two terms which embrace the respective discourses of poverty and wealth and making a living.

The first is power as explicitly seen in the designation *tau tagkusug* (person of/with strength). Power (*kusug*) is here understood as instrumental power, either expressed in the control of economic capital, private or public, and the control of debt (*utang*) relationships, which cut across not just "business" relations but also the professions, with lower level professionals not infrequently being indebted to managers and school administrators who hold the payroll purse strings. Thus, by extension it includes important aspects of (*kabuhianan*) how one is positioned in terms of earning ones living, and may signal the number of economic "clients"- such as the number of of pearl divers (*munda'*), a merchant (*palilitu/capitalista*) is underwriting. More importantly still, however, it refers to the number of followers with whom may or may not have direct economic or productive relation but on whom one can count on in the event of a violent conflict (and cf. Kiefer 1972b who gives a thorough account of violent alliance formation in pre-martial law Sulu). It thus critically pertains to the number of weapons and/or access to military hardware one has. Indeed in reckoning power (*kusug*), the latter violent aspects are by far the most important, so that it was often said of (and by) Chinese merchants, that while they were very wealthy and had resources to finance business undertakings, they were relatively powerless in as much as they did not have direct access to weapons nor did they maintain a cohesive following.

Power (*kusug*) thus subsumes or is best expressive of what is often called class relations in as much as the relations of production in Sulu indicate not only how one is situated relative to the deployment and management of capital resources and labor - expressed most often as a variants of some kind of economic patron/client or *suki'/palilitu* (customer - client) relationship, but also is often dependent on how one is positioned relative to the ongoing and continual realignments of instrumental violence - the particular alignment often reflected in the incumbents to political office and those serving in government employee, which is a necessary part of the control over the channels through which goods and produce flow in and out.

Ultimately, however, power is conceptually encompassed within and by larger concerns of status-prestige. This is seen in the local term which designates the person of great status or prestige, *tau dakula'* - the great person. *Tau dakula'* (great persons) may also possess *kusug* (instrumental power), although not all great persons are necessarily seen as being powerful in terms of armed followers. Rather the *tau dakula'* is defined both by knowledge-power, whether of the traditional kind (*ilmu'*

sin kamaasan) or education (either Islamic and/or secular). More importantly, a *tau dakula*' represents a moral evaluation of powerful and/or wealthy persons by the poor: a reflection of the extent to which persons feel encompassed and/or reciprocally recognized and incorporated by them. Thus, whilst at a certain level the *tau kusug* (person of power) and *tau dakula*' represent different sources of potency, it is the *tau dakula*' who is able to translate this recognized possession of power and potency into a social status through the development of *remembrancing* relations.

Glossary:

Except where otherwise indicated, all of the words are *Bahasa Sug* or *Sinug* (language of the Tausug). I have followed the conventions adopted by the editors of the Tausug-English dictionary (Armour, et. al., n.d.) in using an " ' " instead of an "h" to indicate hard or glottal stop.

Abroad - Refers particularly to places outside of the Philippines (although not including Malaysia) where person go to work abroad.

Adat - Custom, tradition, customary law.

Adjimat - Special amulet consisting of Arabic script carried in a small pouch.

Agama - Religion, Islam.

Akkil Ballig - Puberty.

Alak - Strong alcohol

Alus - (Indonesian) Aesthetically refined.

Ampun - Forgiveness, acceptance, submission.

Anak kasi - Love child; child of illicit relationship.

Anak Ridjal Nanumbaga - Calcified remains of premature fetus.

Angkap - Formerly, a special room within the house where unmarried daughters stayed.

Anting-Anting - Another word for esoteric knowledge - power, also sometimes used in reference to amulets.

Arajang - (Buginese) Royal regalia and heirlooms in Sulawesi's noble houses.

Ardahani - (Indonesian) Mythological half man / half woman figure.

Arjuna - (Indonesian) Refined, prince figure in Javanese *wayang*.

Artista - Film or music star.

Atay - The seat of the emotions, of memory and longing.

Bahala' na! - (Tagalog) Roughly glossed as "To hell with it!"

Baisan - Flirtatious, sexually promiscuous.

Bakla' - (Tagalog) Cognate of Tausug *bantut*, for transgender / transvestite / homosexual.

Bakti' - Religious service, devotion performed for *guru*.

Bakul lima - Ritual clasping of hands, in which thumbs are placed together associated with marriage ritual.

Baldusa - Grave or unforgivable sinner.

Balik-balik - Back and forth or give and take of gifts.

Baluy - Woven pandanus mat.

Bantut - Transgender / transvestite / homosexual; usually used of men, but sometimes of women as well.

Bantut-bantut - diminutive form of *bantut* refers to young boys exhibiting *bantut* like characteristics, but who are considered too young to be 'real' *bantut*.

Bantut suruy - Provincial, from the hills, vulgar *gay/bantut*.

Banyaga - Captive slave.

Baran - The body, also used as reference to first person singular, as in *baranku*, me (also *baran-baranku*).

Barangay - Community, smallest political unit in Philippines.

Barkada - Friend, age-mate, often of the same sex.

Basir - Transvestite - homosexual ritual specialist and prostitutes amongst *Ngadju* people of Kalimantan, (Borneo).

Bassahun/han - Potent utterances and words.

Basta-basta - Indiscriminant.

Bastos - Vulger, indiscreet.

Bata' - Child, client, underling.

Bata-bata' - Infants and young children.

Bayut - (Cebuano/Visayan) Cognate of Tausug *bantut*, Tagalog *bakla'*, [older Spanish references as *bayoquin/babaylan*, *bayoc*].

Bedeja - (Indonesian) Women dancers in Javanese royal courts, which sometimes included young transvestite boys.

Berdache - General term used particularly in reference to transvestite's in Native North American societies.

Bhatara Guru - God, King of Heaven.

Billy/Bennie boy - Refers to transvestite prostitutes, associated with Sabah, Malaysia.

Bisaya' - Term used in reference to all non-Muslim Filipinos.

Bissara - Talk, chatter.

Bissu - (Buginese) Transvestite ritual specialist and guardians of royal regalia for nobility.

Bitawi - Tight fitting, blouse, plunging neckline.

Biyarat - Bastard child; Child of incestuous relation.

Blue seal - Cigarettes smuggled in, imported via Malaysia associated with having been made in America.

Budjang - Young, unmarried, virginal, woman.

Buku - Amulet consisting of a magically knotted cord.

Bulasan - Coward, from root *bulas* referring to uncircumcised penis.

Bulawan / pamulawan - Gold, gold jewellery.

Burikat - Women of loose morals, prostitute.

Callboy - Men paid for homosexual relations.

Casual - Short term sexual relationship between gays and young men, distinguished from callboys in as much as money is not directly transacted as such.

Cedula - Registration tax imposed by American government on Adult males.

Datu' - traditional village leader in Philippines, later restricted to those who could demonstrate genealogical link with line of sultans.

Daging - Male/female sexual fluids.

Dahling - *dahling* - Male/Female mixed dance, sometimes performed by two *bantut*.

Datu'-datu' - Homemade rag doll.

Dayahan - The wealthy.

Diwan - Law code issued by Sultan.

Duwa'a aruwa - Special prayer in remembrance of the deceased.

Environmental - Term used by *gays* to refer to those *gays* whose gayness emerged during their teens.

Expose - Common term *gays* use for their performative appropriation of beauty.

FF (Fighting-fish) - X-rated movies/videos.

Fa'afafine - (Samoan) Transvestite-Homosexual.

Gadji - Wage.

Ganti' - Material exchange, replacement.

Gastu - Cover for expenses

Gay - English term appropriated by transgender men, to distance themselves from derogatory implications of term *bantut*. However, it does not signal a specifically male - homosexual identity.

Gimba - Hinterlands, from perspective of town of Jolo, anything beyond the city limits.

Ginhawa - The non-material aspect of persons including vital force and rational abilities.

Gugma - (Visayan) Love, of family, community.

Guru - Religious teacher, usually specializing in esoteric knowledge power (*ilmu'*).

Habai - Amulets.

Habul - sarong.

Ha-ha boy - Usually quite young boys in Jolo paid by *gays* for sex.

Hatihun - To understand something, internalize something, make it one's own.

Hayup - Animals.

Higad - Coastal periphery.

Hijra - South Asian transvestite, ritual specialist and devotees of *Bachura Mata*.

Hikasin - An expression denoting the possibility of turning a profit; sometimes implies cunning and quick wittedness.

Igal - (Sinama) Refined dance form.

Ihilas tuud - Heartily, generously given.

Ilmu' - Esoteric, magical, science, to do with spiritual potency; a system of knowledge - power.

Ilmu'an - To be filled up with *ilmu'* - efficacious, potent.

Ilmu' Islam - Knowledge-power of Islam.

Ilmu' milikan - Knowledge-power of the American.

Ilmu' Pagkausug - Knowledge-power of masculinity.

Iman - Religious belief, faith.

Inborn - Word used by *gays* to refer to *gays* who say that they have since birth behaved, dressed or felt they were women.

Incik - Refers to Chinese or persons speaking Chinese dialects.

Ipatan - Domestic helper; pet, boys kept, supported by *gay/bantut*.

Istandby - Standby, hang-out.

Istyle - Style, primarily having to do with things defined American.

Isug - Bravery, courage, masculinity.

Janiit - Female/male sexual fluids.

Jihad - Holy war, may either be expansive or defensive.

Jin saytan - Malevolent spirits.

Junub iban istinja' - Referring to purity and pollution, rituals of cleansing.

Juramentado - Spanish term for *parrang sabbil*.

Kadja - Tausug ancestor ritual, usually focused on specific mountain region.

Kamaasan (Sinama *Kamattoa'an*) - Elders, forbears, people of old.

Kanya-kanya in istyle - Everyone doing their own thing; the way of Americans.

Kantil - Upright bed.

Kapu'an - Islands.

Kasar - Indonesian, vulgar.

Kasi - Love and desire.

Kasi-lasa - Desire encompassed by love and compassion.

Khathoi ['Lady-boys'] - (Thai) Transvestite - Homosexuals.

Khutbah - Sermon, oration in Friday prayers.

Kinaidos - (Ancient Greek) Defiled, corrupt, deviant men.

Kitab - holy book

Kiyanpangdihilan - One who is given; a debt slave.

Kodak - camera, pictures.

Kris - Bladed weapon found throughout many parts of Island Southeast Asia.

Kulangan - Mat, sleeping place.

Kuna - (Indonesian) Progressive, modern.

Kursinada - Lover; alternately the target of someone's affection and/or violent intentions.

Kusug - Strength, instrumental efficaciousness, whether bodily, politically or economically.

Laminates - Framed collage of photographs.

Lannang - Chinese speaking persons.

Lasa - Love, compassion, encompassing love.

Latugan - Arousal, male erection.

Lawang - Door, threshold, entryway; euphemism for vagina.

Lindu iban ramdam - Formal, see *kasi-lasa*.

Los nuevos - (Spanish) Referred to newly enslaved in Sulu.

Ludruk - (Indonesian) Proletarian drama described by Peacock (1968).

Luma' Umbo - (Sinama) Ancestral house kept for ritual occasions.

Luman - Social distance, deference.

Luntar - Genealogical jottings of aristocracy passed down as heirlooms.

Lutaw - Ghosts, the living dead.

Luwag - Hole in the ground.

Lumu' - Vulgar.

Maas han sipak - Elders on opposing sides negotiating marriage transactions.

Mabarakat - Endowed with spiritual blessing and grace, potent.

Maarte' - Glamorous, very stylish, but bordering on vulgar, overly made-up and overdone.

Madaris - School for religious instruction.

Magbana-bana - Used by *gays* in terms of steady boyfriends, 'like having a husband'.

Magpangaji - To read/recite Qu'ran in sing-song manner especially during death celebrations.

Magpangguru - To study with a *guru*.

Magsama-sama - To share equally, hold in common.

Mahu - Tahitian transvestites.

Makabusung - Things that bring a curse, ill-fortune from forbears.

Makagawus - Ability, Capacity to fulfil obligations.

Makalummi' - Polluting, defiling.

Makapamantut - Ability to turn a man into a *bantut*.

Makaulung-ulung - Diminutive of *ulung* (compassion) denotes false pity but also revulsion and disgust as in 'Your pitiful!'

Makhdum - Miracle workers and missionaries who figure in mythological accounts of Sulu history.

Maksud - Intent or purpose.

Malingkat - Beauty.

Malumu' - Vulger, indecent.

Malunuk - Soft, effeminate.

Manni' - Male/female sexual fluids.

Mapasu' - Hot, inauspicious.

Martabat - status, honour.

Mayul - Mayor.

Milikan - Local transliteration of American, generally used in reference to any white or 'western' person.

Miskin - Poor.

Moro(s) - Term derived from *Moor* first used by Spanish in reference to Muslims in the Philippines, reappropriated by MNLF (*Moro National Liberation Front*) in late 1960's, early 1970's.

Mulid - Disciple, student, pupil.

Multa' - Customary fine.

Nabi - Prophet of Allah.

Nadupang - Trickery, up to no good.

Nagbagu - To begin again, turn over a new leaf.

Nagistyle-istyle - Styling, striking a pose.

Nagjubul - To engage in anal intercourse (usually means male intercourse).

Nagkabit (nagsideline) - To have an adulterous affair.

Nagtumtum - To remember with longing and affection.

Nalamin - Influence, infectious.

Narka' - Hell.

Ntan - To hold on to, in certain contexts refers to ritual practises associated with ancestral spirits.

Nyawa - Soul(s), life force of persons.

Nyawalihan - Soul force, see also *sumangat*.

Orangkayas - Men of means.

Paggunting - Ritual hair cutting.

Padjak - Pawnshop.

Paghakika - Ritual sacrifice of goat for child.

Paghinang tu, pitu - Third and seventh day celebration following death.

PagIslam - Circumcision.

Pagjagahan kulangan - Keeping watch over the sleeping place of the deceased.

Pagkagay - The continuing state and development of one's gayness.

Pagkatau - status, honour, self-respect.

Pagpangasawa - Opening of formal marriage negotiations.

Pagsunnat - Circumcision, often used only for female ritual circumcision.

Pagtimbang - Ritual weighing.

Pahalal Kawin - Ritual separation and joining of betrothed couple.

Pakil - Ritual specialist, generally men, but also includes women including those who have completed a course in Qur'anic reading.

Palangay - Behavioural characteristics.

Pali-palihan - Folk tales.

Palmanis - Extraordinary enchanted beauty.

Paltanda' - Symbol of intent.

Panday - Female ritual specialist, often associated with childbirth and young children.

Pangikutan - Forerunner of, ideal type of person, which can be found in Qur'an.

Panglima - Appointed official of the Sultan in the traditional polity.

Pangtoman (Sinama) - Remembrances, see *panumtuman*.

Pangalay - Refined Tausug dance form, performed at weddings and other celebrations.

Pangkat - Forbears.

Pangita'an - Visible item of remembrance, souvenir, memento.

Panumtuman - A kind of gift/gifting transaction, which is sometimes translated as a remembrance.

Parrang sabbil - To die in the path of God; ritual suicide.

Pasalubong - Welcoming gift, brought by person to the home they are visiting particularly after a trip.

Pata' - pictures, visual representations.

Pesalinan - Gift of clothing, encompassing recipient within donor.

Pis siyabit - Locally produced handkerchief traditionally worn by, and associated with, Muslim warriors.

Pogot - (Sinama) Stick figure used for divination.

Pong-piyang - Incestuous *gay* relationships.

Prahu - Plank built boats used by Tausug and Sama marauders.

Pu' - Island, root from which words having to do with root, source, capital derive.

Pusaka' - House heirloom, inherited item of remembrance.

Pusud - Navel, of body, house.

Puun - Ancestral root / source; base / trunk of plants and also capital resources.

Putra - Female prostitute (from Spanish).

Raja - Traditional 'indic' ruler in Southeast Asia.

Remembrances/Remembrancing - See *panumtuman*.

Ridjiki' - Material success, wealth, prosperity, luck.

Romanca - Love stories; Scandalous and passionate love affairs.

Rukun Iman - Articles of Islamic belief.

Ruma bicara - Council of wise men.

Sablay - Long, flowing, long-sleeved blouse.

Sabumagad - Presencing of the life soul in death celebrations.

Sangsa' - Gift of labour.

Sarraka - Charitable alms; sometimes used synonomously with *panumtuman* as a gift of remembrance.

Saksi' - Witness, in ritual can be person or object.

Sambra - Waist length, short sleeve, laced-trimmed blouse.

Sa'un - Customary fine.

Sawwal - Light, loose flowing trousers.

Semar - Older coarse but potent clown figure in Javanese wayang, juxtaposed to Arjuna and to Bhatara Guru.

Shari'a - Qur'anic Law.

Silahis (Double-blade) - Man who is both a penetrator and receptor in heterosexual and/or homosexual intercourse.

Singud / Singuran - Appropriative imitation.

Sinumangat llum - (Sinama) To have one's inside disturbed by the longing of another.

Sipug - shame, intentionality.

Sug - The island of Jolo, ocean current.

Subul - Young adult man of marriagable age.

Subul liyaunan - Older bachelor.

Suku' - Portion belonging to, entrusted to person.

Sukud - Luck, fortune, fate.

Sulga' Dunya - Heaven on Earth; euphemism for sexual intercourse and orgasm.

Sulig (simulig, pasulig) - Having to do with growing up, expansion, also yeast, raising agent.

Sumbang - Incest, Killing of close relatives, mythologically signals the common ancestry of humankind.

Sumangat - Life force, spiritual energy, indexed in bodies health.

Supuhanun - Refers to physical features or behaviour characteristic shared with person in ascending generation to whom one is related.

Suratan - One's fate with respect to marriage and family.

Swardspeak - Gay slang, argot.

Tagbangsa - Of royal ancestry.

Tagdapu' - Owner, but also guardian/protector.

Tagmustahak - Person with title/deed.

Tago-ang-tago (TNT) - (Tagalog) Hide and hide; working abroad as illegal immigrant.

Tawal - Water that has been infused with words of power.

Tawbat - Ritual of forgiveness.

Taledek - Indonesian, transvestite dancers.

Tarsilas - chain, genealogical stories.

Tartib - Sacred order pertaining to Islamic polity.

Tau - Human person.

Tau dakula' - great person

Tau Kusug - Person with economic capital, political influence and/or with armed followers.

Tiangi' - Market, Marketplace.

Tindug - Armed follower.

Travesti - Brazilian transvestite - homosexuals.

Tuba - Locally produced coconut wine.

Tulung - Gift of help, either labour and/or other material assistance including cash.

Tunang - Traditionally, betrothed; used to refer to sweethearts.

Tungbas / tumbas - Return, recompense, reward.

Ulung - Pity / compassion.

Umagad - Shadow / courage.

Umbo' - (Sinama) Ancestor.

Ungsud - That which is handed over, bridewealth.

Usba - Paternal cognatic kindred.

Usbawaris - Bilateral kindred.

Usulan - Stories about ancestors / forbears.

Ustadz - Educated religious teachers / professors.

Utang - Debts, references various forms of contractual reciprocity, including commodity exchange and wage labour.

Utang-na-loob - Debt of the inside; debt of gratitude, analogous with *panumtuman*.

Waris - Maternal bilateral kindred.

Wayang [Kulit or Purwa] - (Javanese) Shadow puppets/plays.

Xanith - (Omani) Transvestites.

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